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ELEGY

A previously unpublished poem by

Dylan Thomas

A POST-CHRISTIAN EPOCH?

Philip Sherrard

HENRY MOORE — PRO AND CON

Patrick Heron • Basil Taylor

PISH-TUSH

Wyndham Lewis

FEBRUARY 1956 29 MONTHLY 2s. 6d.

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ENCOUNTER

FEBRUARY 1956 VOL. VI, No. 2

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* IRVING KRISTOL

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This Month's *ENCOUNTER* :—

Indian Excitement

THE recent tour of India by Messrs. Bulganin and Khrushchev, reported in this issue by G. N. S. Raghavan, has caused as much excitement outside that country as in it. Behind this excitement there is doubtless a genuine and friendly concern about the future of a key nation in the Commonwealth, and potentially a leading nation of the world. Within the excitement, however, there are strains of feeling that can only be characterised as hysterical—an emotional reaction utterly disproportionate to the event. It is very much the kind of hysteria that some people may work themselves into when they read articles on virgin birth (as they have been doing in Britain, recently). They lose all sense of cause and effect, of the natural ordering of things, and come to regard each passing day as the possible occasion of calamity.

There is no doubt that we in the West would have been better pleased if India had received the Soviet leaders with less exuberance and warmth. But to conclude from this exuberance and warmth that, unless we do something in a hurry, there is some danger of India's "going Communist," is to reveal a profound disorientation of political senses. Countries do not "go Communist" out of an excess of hospitality. In fact, they do not even "go Communist" because of a vague sympathy with the idea of Communist, with which India's hospitality is not to be equated. The process is decidedly less spiritual, more physical—more sordid, if you like.

Countries do not think themselves into Communism, any more than women think themselves into a state of maternity. In both cases, without the adequate antecedents, the consequences do not follow. Communism in our experience of it, when it is not simply imposed by a Red Army, either openly as in Poland or covertly as in Czechoslovakia, arises out of a complete breakdown of the social order, usually as the result of a disastrous war, which permits an energetic and well-organised minority to seize power by a revolution or a *coup d'état*. Nations do not evolve into Communism; they are pushed into it by catastrophe. In France, a quarter of the population vote Communist, but there is nevertheless no real danger of France "going Communist" without the intervention of another world war. In countries like Yugoslavia or China, on the other hand, how people would have voted did not matter, any more than it mattered that the Bolsheviks in 1918 had a minority in the constituent Assembly. These countries needed governments that could rule, that could restore order and end an intolerable anarchy; and the Communists could do that, whereas the others either could not, or gave the impression that they could not.

Nor is it true that there are such things as "Communist methods" and "democratic methods," which the underdeveloped countries are being asked to choose between. Whether India adopts more or less state control of the economy, whether it has five-year plans, ten-year plans, or no plans at all—all this certainly will have an effect on its economic development and national prosperity, for better or worse. But there has never yet been a case of a country slipping into Communism because it indulged in too much economic planning; or, for that matter, of a country slipping into democracy by way of *laisser-faire*. The notion that this is what happens is a piece of inverted Marxism, a lapse into the mythology wherein History is the product, not of men's wills, but of Socio-Economic Forces. The totalitarian society is in its origins a political creation; it comes into existence because those who have seized

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power have the intention of setting up such a society; in the absence of this intention, and the power to execute it, totalitarianism does not come into being of itself. At any rate, it never has.

IT IS important to be clear on this point, because in the present phase of "competitive co-existence" a great many people seem to have got the idea that "Communism" or "democracy" is something that is sold through clever salesmanship, and every leader writer sees himself as a colonel—at least—in Psychological Warfare. Such an attitude is not only preposterous — it is dangerous as well, for it can poison that spirit of candour and forthrightness which is the free world's most valuable asset.

If, then, we are displeased by the enthusiasm shown by Indians for their Soviet guests, the only decent thing is to say so, and to say why—*not* to figure out ingenious and desperate schemes for "winning the Indians to our side." We ought not to expect too great a response to our arguments: the reasons why Indians feel as they do about the West go very deep, and the wounds of centuries are not healed in a few years. But at least we shall be honest with both the Indians and ourselves, and we must assume that in the long run honesty is the best policy. Fortunately, too, it is possible to speak in terms of "the long run." The present government of India has done an extraordinarily good job under the most frustrating circumstances, and so long as Indians continue to run their country successfully, we need not fear they will "go Communist" just to spite Mr. Dulles. They are too intelligent for that; and —more important—whatever their ideas on world affairs, they are not controlled by a group of zealots who believe that totalitarianism is the best, or "inevitable," form of government.

There is no particular reason why developments in India should please America—any more than developments in America have pleased the older countries of Europe. Nations have their destinies to work out, and the India that is in the making almost certainly will be different from anything we can now conceive of. It will, in fact, be Indian — not English, or American, or Russian. Whether we like an Indian India or not is of no great consequence, since it is their country not ours. What is of great consequence is that we should discuss our political differences on international matters with neither inhibitions nor condescension. There is certain to be many such differences, granted the varying geographical, historical, and psychological facts that have to be taken as given. But we must have faith in their good sense, just as they must in ours. If neither of us has such sense, no amount of rhetorical persuasion or economic aid will be able to put the free world together again.

NOTES ON OUR CONTRIBUTORS:—

LAURIE LEE, author of several books of poems, recently published *A Rose for Winter*, dealing with his travels in Spain.... CZESLAW MILOSZ, author of *The Captive Mind*, now lives in Paris. His essay was translated from the French by ERIK DE MAUNY. . . . THIERRY MAULNIER is a leading French dramatist, critic, and man-of-letters. . . . ERICH HELLER is the author of *The Disinherited Mind*. . . . In our last issue, we expressed puzzlement that Bertram D. WOLFE's *Three Who Made a Revolution* had never been published in England. We are pleased to learn now that Thames and Hudson are scheduling it for spring publication.

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Studies in Social History

A Tribute to G. M. Trevelyan

Eight eminent historians have joined forces to honour Dr. G. M. Trevelyan on his eightieth birthday, each contributing a study of a subject in which he or she is an acknowledged expert. The authors concerned are N. G. Annan, G. S. R. Kitson Clark, H. J. Habakkuk, W. G. Hoskins, Wallace Notestein, A. L. Rowse, C. V. Wedgwood and J. H. Plumb (who also edits the volume).

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LONGMANS

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The Uses of the Dead

Adam Mickiewicz: A Hundred Years After

I. A WAKE IN WARSAW: *Laurie Lee*

IN THE month of their worst weather —and the month also of their most melancholy historical memories — the Poles have just been paying tribute to Adam Mickiewicz, national poet, patriot, romantic, and a hundred years dead. And in honour of this affair the Polish Government — displaying a romantical-political-mystical view of poetry which I from the West find quite unusual—invited, from all over the world, professors, scholars, and poets to join with them in these celebrations. Five such figures were invited from Great Britain, all expenses paid. But as it turned out, I was the only one able to accept.

The invitation came to me in a warm and frantic voice over the telephone from the Polish authorities in London. It seemed that the other four had already made their apologies. The voice was that of a hostess determined to prevent the wreck of a dinner party. It invited me to fly straightway to Warsaw. But of course I was glad to go.

For what could be more innocent than the celebration of a Byronic poet a hundred years dead? Besides I dearly wished to join the ranks of the behind-the-iron-curtain bores and so be protected from them for ever more. I also wanted to prove whether I could survive the Polish winter. And to find out who Mickiewicz was.

But I decided not to fly. I wanted to taste, at the tempo of the train, the slow approach to Warsaw with all its frontiers. So tickets were provided, and I set off.

On the dawn of the second day I entered Germany, changed trains at Stuttgart, and waited an hour for the Warsaw coach. I had not been to this country before, and I observed with interest the hurrying Germans, so long the bogies of my childhood. Brisk, raincoated, carrying brief-cases like heraldic shields, they emptied themselves from their suburban trains and hastened like lovers to their work. Porters, inspectors, and ticket-collectors were uniformed and swagger as Luftwaffe pilots. Painters, even at that early hour, were painting the station like mad. The obsession seemed to be: never to be caught not working—as curious a conformity as its opposite which prevails elsewhere.

My Warsaw coach, when it arrived, was labelled 2nd Class and 3rd Class—and it was explained to me that there was no official 1st Class, but that 2nd Class was in fact 1st Class though formally labelled 2nd (and, for that matter, 3rd was also 2nd). In my comfortable and super-heated compartment, I crossed that daylight Germany, through forests of conifers and hop-poles, across neat and banded landscapes striped like medieval England. Towards Nuremburg the sky darkened and it began to snow. One by one

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the American Army officers picked up their field-green luggage and left us. The restaurant car was taken off. The carriages on the train grew rapidly fewer. We were approaching Czechoslovakia.

The formalities at Schirnding, the German frontier, were swift and easy. Nobody seemed to care where we were going, or why. There was just time to buy a last German beer. Girls waved from the country platform and shouted jovialities. Then the train, so small and quiet now, creaked slowly eastwards through a shallow snow-flecked cutting; the landscape was dark and wet and birchy, and I awaited with excitement the appearance of the Communist frontier. When it came, it did not disappoint.

FIRST, across the cabbagy fields, a broad band of tank-traps came into sight, black as liquorice in the driving sleet. Next, tall wooden watch-towers, with legs astride, stood at solemn intervals about the horizons, observing, threatening, keeping their own grim council. Then a dozen soldiers, furry as rabbits, appeared from nowhere and trotted beside the train. With Russian-style hats and quilted coats, they looked as cuddly as children's toys, except for the shining tommy-guns in their hands.

The train halted in a dilapidated station, slate-dark, weedy, like a country halt in Wales. We were in Czechoslovakia. The soldiers took up their positions on either side of the train and watched the windows. In the compartments all was still. There was a great silence, and for a while nothing happened.

While we waited, I peered through the steaming windows to see what I could. Great black engines stood in the sidings, with rusty red stars fixed to their funnels. There were some silent military huts, as scruffy and homeless as anywhere in the world. The platforms were of wet, marshy gravel. There were no kiosks, buffets, paper-sellers, money-changers, or any of the usual business of frontier towns. I saw a troupe of about forty women marching across a muddy field. In the distance a country house, pink, florid, stood in ruins. The only new and polished objects in sight were the bayonets and tommy-guns of the sentinel soldiers.

Suddenly the frontier inspectors arrived, as smart as guard's officers, polite as head waiters, bowing, saluting, and talking all languages. They looked under the seats, took our passports away, and didn't come back for two hours.

At last, in the gathering, vaporous dusk, we moved out of the station. We crossed Czechoslovakia in darkness, and it is the darkness that I chiefly remember. Every so often we stopped at a large town, but the town and the station seemed half-lit and deserted, as though in a state of war.

Towards nine o'clock we arrived in Prague, but the streets were empty, everybody seemed to have gone to bed, and there was nothing to be seen except the stars in the river. We were due for a three-hour wait here, and I was told that an official would meet me and give me dinner.

I stepped from the train, feeling homeless and far away. The platform emptied and I was left alone with one small dark-suited man, who ignored me. We paced up and down for a while, then I heard a gasp: "But, Mr. Lee?" Yes, I said, and the small man whistled with astonishment, then sighed and shook my hand.

We walked to a hotel nearby and had dinner. My companion said he had eaten already, but he had another one all the same. He was a thin young man, seen in the hotel light, with pale eyes and a desperate smile. He seemed very ill at ease, tapping his feet and drumming his fingers continuously. We ate goose, dumplings, and ice-cream, with Pilsen beer. The man, in his tuneless English, struggled hard to talk of culture. Towards the end of the meal I asked him what had become of Jira Mucha, the Czech poet, who returned to Prague from London some years ago and of whom nothing had been heard since. At my question the man paused abruptly in his fidgeting and looked at me in expressionless silence for a moment. Then he said, "Mucha? Mucha?" and drew his fingertip across the tablecloth. "Do you know, that

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is very interesting. 'Mucha' is our word for 'fly.'"

I left it at that, and we went back to the station. The Warsaw train was crowded with stalwart young men. I knew I would have to sit up all night, but there was nowhere to sit. "Do not worry," said my companion. He threw open a compartment door and in quiet, icy tones, addressed the travellers within. I caught the words "delegate" and "poet." Immediately everyone jumped to their feet. I selected a corner seat and sat down. The displaced person waved cheerily at me, said "Sleep well, Johnny," in English, and went and sat in the corridor. But I slept badly, for the rest of my fellow travellers, either through habit or by design, ate apples throughout the night.

POLAND appeared next day in a grey veil of driving sleet. I had drugged myself so I didn't see much of it. I remember dimly a deterioration of landscape; flat, soggy fields; dark, wood-walled villages; hovels with thatched, weed-sprouting roofs; peasants on muddy roads, heads down to the weather; steaming horses drawing long four-wheeled wagons; fat, trousered women working the stations and the level-crossings.

Then, after a long, dozing, twilit day, we arrived in Warsaw. I expected ruins; instead I saw a city. The slow approach to the station took us through the rain-drenched suburbs, thickly inhabited but curiously unformed. What struck me immediately was the commercial chastity of the place. Factories, blocks of flats, institutes, rose squarely out of the suburban mud. But no hoardings, no shops, no cinemas, petrol stations, or cosy cafés. No motor-cars—only wagons and huddled pedestrians about the streets. And at regular intervals along the track, hand-painted slogans on strips of wood, though rather worn and flaking.

At Warsaw station I was received by a delegation of welcome—though we didn't recognise each other immediately. It was rather reminiscent of Prague. The platform emptied and I walked up and down. By the barrier stood four women, plump, in mackintoshes, and wearing what looked like bathing caps on their heads. They fluttered with anxiety and peered around the platform, but when they saw that no one else was getting off the train they decided that I must be the one.

They introduced themselves. Two were official porters, and they seized my bags. One was my interpreter. The older one was a famous Polish writer, chosen to honour me with a personal welcome. She gave me short shrift, however; she told me I was late, drove with me in silence to my hotel, shook hands sharply like a disappointed marriage-broker, then disappeared and I never saw her again.

The biggest hotel in Warsaw had been set aside to house the foreign guests. "Hotel Bristol" it said in large letters across the front, though I was told the name had since been changed. Flags of all nations fluttered from its shrapnel-pitted façade. Its great hall was dark and full of square, shaggy men in caps and padded coats whom I first took to be spies or secret police but who later turned out to be cab-drivers.

The first thing that I had to do was to sign on at the reception desk of the Mickiewicz Committee. Their welcome was efficient and warm. They gave me a booklet of meal-coupons, to last me a week; an authority to make two free telephone calls to anywhere in the world; a guide to Warsaw; a guide to Mickiewicz, and a discreet white envelope stuffed with zloty for me to spend.

But I had been travelling for three days; I was almost speechless with fatigue, self-pity, and the sense of distance I had come. I didn't want to be just another honoured but self-sufficient visitor, to be ticked off on their list; I wanted to establish some special contact, as one in need of particular care. I was not as robust as I looked, I said. I was, in fact, very delicate, and could be carried off by the slightest breath of cruel air.

The Committee at first looked at me with astonishment. Then they warmed to their responsibilities. Their eyes softened; they began to snap their fingers commandingly at each other. Before I knew what was happening they bore me upstairs, established me in

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a room next door to the First Aid Dispensary, introduced me to the pretty young nurse, shoved her bed hard against my wall, mine hard against hers, and bid me bang on the wallpaper—at any time—if I ever needed her help. It was an arrangement that worked like a charm and gave me lasting confidence and comfort.

Meanwhile my interpreter, a charming, blue-eyed, but rather prim young woman, had ordered me high tea, and she sat with me while I ate it. During the meal she declared that it would be her happy privilege to remain by my side as long as I was in Warsaw. In fact, she would never leave me; it was her duty and her honour. She smiled brilliantly, and I began to buck up. We looked at one another in silence for a while, each examining the possible implications of her duty. Presently she began to ask questions about my work, taking notes of my replies. She frowned when I said lyric poetry and wrinkled her nose. But she gasped with delight when I said I had written a play about John Ball's Peasant Revolt. "Is it progressive?" she asked. "Oh, yes," I said. "We will have it translated immediately," she said. Her eyes shone; mine shifted uneasily. I don't suppose we were ever closer to each other than at that moment. Certainly we both soon proved unfaithful. She was disappointed by my liking for vodka and by what she called my "lack of cultural seriousness." And I must say that her subsequent passion for a certain sober American professor irritated me no end.

The next morning I breakfasted briskly at nine—pork and two eggs, jam, rolls, and coffee. My interpreter, fresh as a scrubbed lettuce, was at my side. We were joined by her colleague, a young, sadly humorous man who worked in the Palace of Culture. He told me that his favourite reading was Webster's Dictionary, and certainly his English, though fluent, was decorated with much unfamiliar bric-à-brac.

As I sat there, warmed by their undivided attention, I felt again a distinction of strangeness, as one who had penetrated secret Tibetan frontiers and made friends with the monks. The light of the morning snowfall shone through the windows, the whisper and click of the Slav languages being spoken around me rustled like cicadas. I was pleased, after all, at being the unique lone traveller from Britain. Then I had a shock.

Sitting quietly alone at a distant table, reading a propped-up book and patiently awaiting his breakfast, was Graham Greene.

My heart sank. I asked my hosts to excuse me and went across to speak to him. He received me with a detached warmth as though this place were the Savile Club. He looked ruddy and well. As the private guest of some Polish catholics he had been given a room in the hotel but he did not qualify for the meal-tickets accorded to State guests. He had, therefore, been waiting an hour for his private breakfast, and he didn't think he would get any until we pampered poets had first been served. "In any case," he said rather testily, "shouldn't you all be at meetings or something by now?" As we spoke, his breakfast arrived; a glass of chilled vodka and two rolls. He put the rolls aside and drank the vodka. "I've lived on nothing else," he said, "since I got here." I was pleased to see him, yet chastened and slightly let down. Here, of all places; and after all the trouble I'd taken. It was like sharing Everest with Tenzing.

THAT morning there was a great stir in the hotel hall. The interpreter-guides, in their mackintoshes and bathing caps, rushed flush-faced here and there. Poets were being rounded up in their separate language groups—half-dozen of Latin-Americans; half-dozen of East Germans; a brace of Balkans, assorted Nordics, and me. Wonderingly we stood in the dark hall, facing the thick double curtains which separated us from the light and cold of the street. And as one waited for the last late bards to be brought from their beds we asked ourselves which of the two great mysteries would first be revealed to us—Mickiewicz or Warsaw city? It proved to be the latter—the poet for the moment was being kept in cold storage.

A fleet of grey official motor-cars drove us fast through the wide and greasy streets. We

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were bound for a lecture to be given by city architects. They showed us three great solemn maps: Warsaw as it was in 1939—a mixed-up mosaic of yellow lozenges; Warsaw in 1945—total destruction; then Warsaw as it was and would be—the mosaic tidied up in red and sliced through by broad north-south, east-west, boulevards; all, that is, except for one original muddle still remaining towards the north. The woman lecturer, in flowery French, referred to this part last. "As modern architects, you understand, we wish to build only what is new, contemporary, or supra-contemporary. But we have also found it necessary to make a gesture to nostalgia and the sentiment of the middle-aged by rebuilding exactly part of the Old Town." And the smile she gave us asked forgiveness.

Later, I drove round the thawing, rain-swept city with my two guides. Moody as ever, they sat in a torpor now, making no comment unless I asked a question. And yet that journey, with the obvious reflections that rose out of it, was my most moving experience in Poland. We drove in weaving circles for about three hours: up the great boulevards, snaking through the new Old Town, crossing the sombre acres of flattened ghetto, and past the vulgar, soaring, Russian-built Palace of Culture and Science. We drove through parks, round factories, past the Party Office; looked at the Government paper-mill — as large as Olympia—and visited various monuments. But only slowly did I tune-in through my Western-protected senses to what I was seeing. Naked, prim, unfinished, and dateless in aspect, this city, spreading from horizon to horizon and already the home of a million people, was yet one of the youngest cities in the world. Every building one saw, no matter what the style, was new, and every person in the street—clerk, cab-driver, fat wife, or pretty student—each had a tale to tell so steeped in the experience of horror that to us it is still unimaginable.

There are only two other cities in the world that know what Warsaw knows. The destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, by a triumph of super-gadgetry, lasted only some thirty seconds. Warsaw's fate was more old-fashioned, requiring six years of enemy occupation finally to do the trick. But it was just as complete in the end. Villas, tenements, churches, schools, theatres, palaces, libraries, shops; the baroque, the medieval, the formal, the friendly, the charming, and the poor; by bomb and shell, flame-thrower and dynamite; successively, surely, and not always in the heat of battle, had all been wiped away. And the people shot or removed.

All this is known but all this, in Warsaw today, must be remembered. As must also those late months of 1945 when the people of Warsaw, released from their prison camps, drifted back to reoccupy their city. They looked for Warsaw and they found nothing. Nothing but a drifting wilderness of bricks, smelling rankly of the dead. Perhaps here and there, on the edge, a thin and starving house, like a gob of flesh on a burnt-out skeleton. Otherwise nothing. Nothing that was human or memorable or that could be identified as a city. No roofs or glass, no cloth or fires, no tables, altars, books, or bread, no women, children, horses, or fowls. There were no survivors of this destroyed city. The refugees came back to nothing.

They scratched among the jagged waste of brick and found the streets. They scratched again and found the cellars of the dead. And there, for a while, they set up house.

The first thing they did, as though to re-establish their identity and the identity of Warsaw, was to reconstruct, in exact detail, the squares and winding lanes of the Old Town. Much of this reconstruction has already been completed and it is a miracle of love and patience—working from old photographs and drawings, several hundred houses have been rebuilt exactly as they stood before the dynamiters blew them to the ground. It is strange to walk through those streets today. The ghosts of the wartime dead, returning now, could find their way intimately among these houses. They glitter again in the frosty sunlight in all the paint and gilding of their 17th century splendour, exact from Flemish roof and gable, down painted walls of grapes, boar-hunts, minstrels, and dancing peasants,

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to the arched and studded doorways of ancient wood topped by their wrought-iron lamps. It is an architectural resurrection wrapped in a rare emotional haze—as though we had exactly rebuilt the city of London after the Great Fire, taverns, brothels, and all. It lacks only one thing, some breath of its original human life to animate those faultless walls. For though many of the buildings are lived in, by families of grace and favour, they are cold as museums yet.

The Old Town is a nostalgic pocket, and is only a small part of modern Warsaw. But in much of the rest of the rebuilding an eye has been kept on the past. Successions of broad and formally fronted streets have been re-created, some in a curious Georgian style, others exactly as Canaletto painted them. There is also a certain amount in the non-committal, poker-faced, concrete-and-glass, Great West Road tradition. But on the whole it is nostalgia rather than expediency that has gone into the rebuilding of this city, and Warsaw today, standing upon its ashes—a rolled-out raft of brick and bones which it would have taken too long to remove—cannot be viewed without emotion.

My tour ended on the banks of the Vistula. We sat in the motor-car and gazed across the slow and rain-starred river—not much wider than the Thames at Battersea—and saw the low bank where the Red Army sat quietly through the three-month hell of the Warsaw Insurrection, watching the last of the city die. According to all the known patterns of Hollywood films, Russian films, and the Songs of the Partisans, the Red Army, when it saw the people of Warsaw rise and take arms against their oppressors, should have blazed their way across the river and rescued them. But they didn't. The Warsavians, heartened by the sight of the Russians so near, rose up and fought the Germans with anything they could lay their hands on. The Germans machine-gunned them. The people took to the sewers, were starved out, and machine-gunned again. Meanwhile the remains of their city, street by street, was dynamited. And the Red Army sat and watched across the river.

"What happened?" I asked my guides.

The girl said nothing. The voice of the young man, normally so casual and witty, came to me in a clipped and solemn trance.

"The Warsaw Rising was premature," he said. "The leaders were traitors. They gave the signal to rise without consulting the Red Army generals. They gave the signal only because they wished for political leadership after the war. The Polish people despise them as opportunists and careerists. In any case, the Red Army was helpless—their lines of communication were too far extended."

"Why was no help flown in?"

"Ah, that was the trouble. The Rising was split up—a ring of Poles, a ring of Germans, then Poles, then Germans, and so on. Supplies would have fallen into the arms of the Hitlerites." He smiled at me softly. "No can do, you understand?"

BY THAT evening most of the world-wide guests had been gathered in, and when we sat down to eat we filled a banqueting hall. We observed each other closely, as though it was the first night out on a liner. There were poets here of every kind, white-maned Russians, turbanned Pakistanis, bright-bloused Bulgarians, slit-eyed Yugoslavs, prim Dutch, clerkly Swedes, knotty Norwegians; Spaniards speaking French, Hindus speaking German, Americans speaking English and Chinese speaking everything.

At my table I had been joined by two professors from prominent United States universities. They had just arrived on separate aircraft and were delighted, almost hysterical, at meeting each other. Sonya, the interpreter, sat demurely between them and they talked across her. Her dazed blue eyes clicked rhythmically between them as though watching a tennis match.

"Did you get photographed at the airport?" they asked each other. "Boy, *I* did! Carnations, too. Ha ha! And you'll be speaking on the radio too, you know. Oh, yes. The works. But meantime," voices were lowered, "let me tell you about the beds. Let me warn you. The mattresses, for instance. . . ."

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After a few days the poets began to stray from their language groups and to mix a little. Our kindly interpreters were like nannies, and it was difficult to slip their clinging hands, but we managed it at last. My first break for freedom took me into the Old Town, in search of a tavern. There weren't any. I had a beer at the counter of a State grocer's shop, but it was as thick and sweet as treacle, and cost seven shillings (official rate of exchange). Finally, in a wine-shop in a side-street, I succeeded in persuading an old lady, by a series of dramatic gestures, to slip me a bottle of vodka in exchange for a small tin of Nescafé. She was pleased by the exchange, and the arrangement preserved itself throughout my stay.

In the course of these excursions I ran into the broad bulk of the Czech poet Nezval and we walked together in the snow, though we had no common language. I also met an Egyptian senator-judge, who was also a C.B.E. and a verse-dramatist (and when I told Sonya, later, all the things he was, she was plainly shocked). I walked and talked with a neat Chinese of the same name as myself, and I exchanged quotations with a Hindu. But my favourites were the Latin-Americans, who never lost their personal sense of celebration. Returning, battered, from a four-hour lecture, they would say to me, "Come, poet, let's go upstairs and have a concert." There, round a bottle-laden table, they would fight the cold with Andalusian cries. Neruda, the Chilian, would exclaim "Pan Tadeusz!" in helpless amazement, then reverse his jacket for added comfort. The Cuban, Guillen, would sing some Indian songs. Rafael Alberti would fill our note-books with drawings of fighters in suits of light, and his precocious but beautiful fourteen-year-old daughter, Aitana, would slip me poems in English, complaining: "I know too much. . . . I can talk only with angels."

I spent much time with this cynical, warm-blooded group, but Sonya, in the end, disapproved of it. "Wouldn't you like to meet some *Polish* writers?" she asked severely. I said I would, and wrote out a list of names. She tucked them into her bag and said she would arrange for a meeting immediately. But not one of them ever turned up.

But Mickiewicz? What can I say about Mickiewicz? When I went to Warsaw I knew nothing about him. I still know nothing about him—at least, nothing about the poet. For a week Mickiewicz was the password of our existence. Our rooms were full of his references. The image of his thin face and flowing hair was plastered about the city. We went to long lectures about him. We attended the official opening of his museum (where a German scholar lost a boot and fell flat on his face before the newsreel cameras). The museum was full of heroic sculptures, paintings, death masks, and first editions in Russian. In the theatre we witnessed his static, five-hour play, "Forefather's Eve." Finally, in the glittering, iced-cake Assembly Hall of the Palace of Culture, accompanied by all the leaders of the State, we listened to twelve international authorities, in seven languages, deliver addresses in the dead man's honour. He was a patriot, the soul of Poland, a revolutionary socialist, a major statesman, a partisan for freedom, an exile, and a martyr. But I don't remember hearing what kind of poet he was, and I never succeeded in finding out.

Yet sitting there, spot-lit on the brocaded seats of honour, in the great hall, with the official mighty, and surrounded by several thousand breathless citizens, young and old, I could not help feeling stirred and amazed, as the hours went by, that such reverence and such a national pause should be devoted to the memory of a poet, no matter how dead or good he was. I began to compare this august ceremony with those major literary occasions we sometimes enjoy in Britain—the Foyle's Luncheon, the P. E. N. Club Dinner, the Annual General Meeting of the Royal Society of Literature, and the furtive annual opening, by a speechless mayor, of the Shakespeare Memorial Festival. Here in Warsaw's Palace of Culture, large and holy as a cathedral, I looked about me, took a deep breath, and inflated myself. The

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Secretary of the Party, the Prime Minister, all the country's great, sat dumb and enslaved, gazing up at the fifty-foot portrait of the poet and at the bright-pated literary figures who sat like gods on the high platform. We had been fetched from the world's ends for this moment, all expenses paid; we had been lodged in pomp, cossetted, flattered, and treated with awe. We were the possessors of powerful secrets, each one a kin to Mickiewicz's immortality. Surely, I thought, here, if nowhere else, the pen has inherited the earth.

It was not till the lights were turned down, and the newsreel cameras had departed, and the week-long celebrations were ending that I began to discover a reason for all this. I may be wrong, but it seemed simple enough. Was it not that Poland, whose identity has always been threatened with evaporation by hot blasts of power either from Germany or from Russia, was seeking a major figure, a national myth; and one, moreover, who, though in every sense a Pole, had for much of his life been nourished and sheltered by that part of the Western world to which their emotions naturally turn? The shadow of Russia had always been close and heavy. Someone must be found who was innocently free from this. So Mickiewicz, exile and mystical patriot, romantic poet, long-time dead, Moscow-persecuted and Paris-protected, was their natural choice. And to the founding of this man as State-god, fore-father Adam, we from around the world had been bidden as witnesses. It might have been worse, I suppose. It might have been a general.

On my last day, with the celebrations slowing down, a free-for-all had been arranged at the University during which the visiting poets were invited to read from their works.

The assembly hall was packed with students of both sexes, their faces shining with welcome and youthful grease. Amid thunderous clapping a dozen of us filed towards the platform while girls ran forward and showered us with winter flowers. We sat on the platform grinning amongst these blooms, while a sea of blue eyes sparkled expectantly below us. I had never, in the name of poetry, seen so many gathered together before, and again that drunken feeling welled within me.

Then, one by one, in our several languages, we read a poem each. And almost all made the same mistake. Assuming that every word would be intimately understood, most poets read in that scared, inhibited voice which seems part and package of the modern style. I was lucky because I came last on the list, and it soon occurred to me that what the students really wanted, in default of sense, was passion and noise. (This was proved by the success of the Cuban, Guillen, who read a poem in a dialect so springing and rhythmical that you could have danced to it.)

Then — worse still — a tweedy, dapper, Dutch poet got up and announced a poem in English—which I thought was my province. "This poem is about Poland," he said, "and in it I have developed the charming idea of referring to Poland as a woman." Low-voiced and deferential, he then read a poem of straight-forward, though scarcely top-grade, pornography—"your lips, your eyes, your hips, your thighs" — ending as an afterthought, "Poland shall never die!" I was outraged. Who did he think he was fooling?

As I followed this man I thought, we must do better than that. My poem, sense or no, was really going to sound like something. I gripped the lectern with both hands and bawled my head off. I made more noise than all the rest of the poets put together and ended up shaking all over. I don't suppose I was ever so moved in my life.

It was noon, and time to leave for England, and I was ready to go. On this day, and on two others in the week, a sleeping-car ran straight from Warsaw to Paris. My ticket was bought and I looked forward to a comfortable journey. Then, on my return from the University, I was met by long faces in the hotel. "We have bad news for you," they said. "You cannot leave from Warsaw. The sleeping-wagon is broken."

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The winter blizzards were really beginning to blow that day. "There must be *some* train out of Warsaw," I said. "I'll take anything." "You will?" They opened their eyes in astonishment and went away to confer. Presently the Celebration Officials approached me, jaunty and jovial. "Ah, Mr. Lee," they said. "We hear you are going to Paris the sporting way. Ha ha!" And they shook hands with generous relief.

The journey proved to be more sporting than even they had imagined—fifty hours, five changes, three frontiers, and no porters. To make matters worse, I was loaded with a three-day hamper in a loose cardboard box and a hundredweight of Polish books tied up with string. The hamper contained half a goose, a pound of ham, six pickled gherkins, butter, cheese, three bottles of pop, and two dozen big red apples. Across the face of Europe, scrambling in and out of trains, in snow and rain, in mist and darkness, I fought a losing battle with these things. At every station the hamper burst and apples and gherkins went bouncing away beneath the cider-pressing feet of Poles and Czechs and Germans. Then, as the wolves of exhaustion began to catch up on me, I selected and abandoned, one by one, the thick black books my Polish hosts had given me. A five-volume collection of the poems of ——— (in Polish) was donated anonymously to the station-master at Prague. Ten volumes of literary criticism went through a lavatory window near Petrovice. The collected reflections of the Slavophil ——— I dropped into some passing goods-wagons just outside Nuremberg. As for the collected works of Adam Mickiewicz: fifteen volumes, in brown, gold-embossed leather; I stuck to them through thick and thin. It seemed the least I could do.

THERE is a little more that I would add. Among the unsorted odds and ends that still remain with me I remember the thin, plain maid in the hotel, who asked me to send her as many copies of *Vogue* as I could lay my hands on. The Rumanian poet who had a brainstorm and left the hotel, screaming. The pale, sick face of the English ex-patriot, late of the British Council, who is now a Polish subject, successful and despised. The cabaret that made us laugh so with its attacks on queues, transport, and the Palace of Culture. The Polish poet who is just bringing out, with official backing, a two-volume, *de luxe* translation of the works of Lord Byron.

Two more things. For much of my journey back across Europe I was accompanied by a young German wife and her child. She was married to a Pole in Cracow and was on her way to visit her Stuttgart mother, whom she had not seen for nine years. At Cheb, on the Czechoslovakian frontier, I saw a hundred elderly, silent Germans, with pink, pinched faces, in new overcoats and boots, line up to board the train. They were political prisoners being repatriated. For twenty hours the Polish-German wife made small talk with me; then, when we arrived at last in Germany, she wept as I have never seen anyone weep. The hundred elderly Germans, received at their home-stations with bands, flowers, press photographers, and crumpling-faced wives, turned away from their welcome, one by one, and leaned against the hoardings, weeping like found children.

From this it seemed clear that the frontiers between East and West were opening again, if only a little. But what the last nine years has meant to the divided in Europe is something that we, here, cannot begin to understand.

Finally, having been able to compare, even so briefly, the two worlds that make up our world; having sensed the solemn, passionate, puritan purpose of the one; the brassy, busy, bosomy, every-man-for-himself cosiness of the other, I am in no doubt now which one I must choose. But I am not at all sure that, in the long run, it will be what history chooses.

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II. THE REAL MICKIEWICZ: *Czeslaw Milosz*

BOURDELLE'S statue of Mickiewicz on the Place de l'Alma in Paris conveys little to the tourist. It was unveiled between the wars, amid the usual official speeches, to the strains of the Marseillaise and the Polish national anthem. For the literary public, the name of Mickiewicz evokes the romantic gesture, the grandiloquence of a typically 19th century patriot, the sufferings of "martyred Poland." In 1955, the Polish People's Republic celebrated the centenary of the poet's death. Committees were set up, with the participation of a great many Western personalities, and speeches have been made, in one country and another, exalting Mickiewicz in his rôle of progressive and revolutionary. Once more, it is to be feared, an edifying example proves to be more useful to the needs of The Cause than the rather more complicated truth. Meanwhile, there is ground for sketching a brief portrait. For Mickiewicz is one of those unknown writers who are more disfigured by the monuments to their fame than they would be by complete oblivion.

The Barrier of Language

THE two great Slav poets, Mickiewicz and Pushkin, are separated from the Western reader by the barrier of language. Both are untranslatable, or very nearly so. There is only an apparent relationship between the poetic development of different peoples, the illusory notion of a parallel course; for this illusion conceals the most essential element, the poetic instrument itself. The iambic line of Shakespeare has no equivalent in France. And who would dare to assert, without having read the original, that Donne was a great master of words? Among the moderns, T. S. Eliot has found an ideal French interpreter in Pierre Leyris, but W. H. Auden remains quite inaccessible to French readers. In the Slavonic languages, Shakespeare — for example in the excellent translations of Boris Pasternak — can be rendered in rich and rhythmic depth; but Racine eludes all similar attempts. For the same reason—and here we come to the very source of that which separates different languages in their homeliest and most everyday shades of meaning—the regular verses of Mickiewicz, translated into their Victorian equivalent, would merely engender tedium. There is, indeed, a prose version in English of *Pan Tadeusz*, but all that remains of that extraordinary "novel in verse," whose characters move like the figures in a ballet, is the sort of plot one might find in Sir Walter Scott (in the Everyman's Library, it is included in the section headed "Fiction"). Take Flaubert's irony away from him, and the result would be pitiable. I have been told that H. G. Wells, during the last war, tried to read *Eugene Onegin* in translation. He quickly became discouraged, and decided it was a foolish and vapid work. Thus, whoever persists in proclaiming the merits of these incommunicable writers runs the risk of being accused of chauvinism, or at least of failing to possess a proper sense of proportion.

A Romantic?

MICKIEWICZ, who was born in 1798 and died in 1855, was closer to German than to French romanticism. But he came from a classical tradition, and although the pedants of his own day treated him as a "barbarian," he enriched that tradition rather than broke away from it. The Latin poets, particularly Virgil, were his models. As a political *émigré*, he taught Latin literature at the Lausanne Academy, and when he left that post, it was to become Professor of Slavonic Literatures at the Collège de France. His favourite author in adolescence was Voltaire. Later came the influence of Schiller, Goethe, Byron. With contemporary French poets he had no contact—his friendships in Paris were with men like Montalembert, Quinet, Miche-

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let, Lamennais, and the journalists and politicians of the Left. He was a romantic in his ideas, yet precise and never given to rhetoric when it came to enhancing the power of words by setting them in their just place. Perhaps this contrast may in part account for the fascination of his work. One is surprised by his metrical inventiveness. Yet it is well concealed, the verses engraving themselves on the memory thanks to a certain way of placing the cæsura, or a particular use of enjambment. His language is simple enough for all to understand, and seems to be spoken rather than written. To find a Byronic poet who exercises the strictest discipline in his use of words is to be presented with a rare verbal combination; but in poetry, that which is stated differently is different in its essence.

A Pole and a Russian

It was not by chance that I spoke earlier of Pushkin, the contemporary of Mickiewicz. The two men met and became friends. Russia's national poet and Poland's national poet: here, indeed, is a heaven-sent theme for the writers of a People's Democracy, intent on proving that it is no idle talk to speak of the fraternal bonds between the two peoples in the past. Many a sculptor has received a prize for depicting Mickiewicz and Pushkin covered by the same mantle. Nevertheless, their friendship lends itself awkwardly to such pious iconography.

Let us take 1824 as our starting-point. Mickiewicz had finished his studies at the University of Vilno. (Today, Vilno—or Vilnius—is the capital of the Lithuanian Soviet Republic.) In his own eyes, he was both Lithuanian and Polish, just as today a Scotsman is also British. The national and separatist aspirations of the Baltic countries had not yet come into being. At about that period, Mickiewicz was working as a teacher in another Lithuanian town, Kovno (or Kaunas, in Lithuanian). He had won fame with his first volume of poems, published in 1822. Then came the arrest and trial of the clandestine group of which he had been one of the prime movers. For some decades, his country had belonged to the Empire of the Tsars; and Mickiewicz's circle drew its inspiration from the odes of Schiller and other European writings which breathed a hatred of tyrants. The sentence passed upon him was deportation to Russia. If anything, the punishment was mild, since he was not sent to prison; he was merely forbidden to reside in his native country. He set out, therefore, and arriving in Russia, was greeted with open arms by the Russian liberals. It must be recalled that this was just a year before the Decembrists' plot, and the young Russian intelligentsia was already conspiring against the régime. Thus, Mickiewicz found himself among people of his own stamp, even although speaking a different language.

He spent five years in Russia, writing and frequenting the literary salons, welcomed everywhere with Slav cordiality—and constantly under surveillance by the police. On one occasion, it was a man of letters who drew up reports on his mental outlook; on another, the inoffensive naturalist who accompanied him on his excursions in the Crimea was revealed to be a high official of the secret police. And there was even a lady of high society, in love with Mickiewicz, who yet fulfilled the specific assignment of informing the authorities of the political behaviour of her lover. Both Mickiewicz and the police, as it turned out, were playing a double game: it was with the help of his mistress that, in 1829, he was given a passport to go abroad—never to return.

From his journey to the shores of the Black Sea, Mickiewicz brought back his *Crimean Sonnets*, which belong to the realm of pure poetry—by which I do not mean poetry exempt from human passions. He also published his *Konrad Wallenrod*, a long poem based on the medieval chronicles. It is a kind of saga: during the wars waged by the Order of Teutonic Knights against pagan Lithuania, one of the Knights, Konrad, a converted Lithuanian, manages by a series of ruses to become head of the Order—only to lead his forces into a trap which he himself has prepared beforehand, thus avenging the

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sufferings of his own people. The allegory was clear to all the supposedly loyal subjects of the Tsar in the conquered nations. In conformity with the general rule, the poem bore a dedication to the Tsar Nicolas I, and the final sentence proclaimed: "May the name of the Father of so many peoples be glorified in every generation and in every tongue." It can be seen that the Russians are not wholly unjustified in complaining about Polish duplicity.

Mickiewicz met Pushkin in Russia, and the friendship that grew up between them was sincere. Both being opposed to oppression, they had no need to hide their sentiments. Each exerted an influence on the other. If a note of bitterness was later to creep into their relationship, that bitterness was political in origin.

AFTER leaving Russia, "for a health cure" in Germany, Mickiewicz confessed that, during all those years passed under the watchful eye of the police, he had "slid along as silently as a snake, deceiving the despot." From his pen now came poems in which Russia was depicted in the darkest colours. Pushkin, receiving these works through the hands of compatriots living abroad, had an abrupt revulsion into outraged patriotism. He was not well acquainted with the language, but his library contained the four volumes of Linde's "Dictionary of the Polish Language," as well as three other dictionaries and two grammars. With these, he set about copying the denunciatory verses of his former friend line by line—and in the Russian alphabet, so as to understand them better. Then he wrote his reply: *The Bronze Horseman*, one of the greatest poems ever written, a poem at once simple and enigmatic, in which revolutionary fervour mingles with admiration for Peter the Great, the founder of Russia as a modern power (for this "bronze horseman" who reins in his foaming steed on the banks of the Neva is indeed monument to the founder of St. Petersburg). Yet if his intention was polemical, it carried no hatred with it. In that same autumn of 1833, while he was working on his riposte, Pushkin translated two of Mickiewicz's early poems—and since the very mention of the latter's name was forbidden in Russia, published them with this indication of their authorship: "by M—cz."

There also exists a brief poem which Pushkin addressed to Mickiewicz a short time afterwards. Here is the text in a literal translation:

> He lived among us, amid a people alien to him. In his soul he harboured no malice toward us. We, too, loved him. Gentle, kindhearted, he took part in our discussions. We shared with him the pure dream and the song. (He was inspired from above, and thus looked upon the world from a lofty height.) Often he spoke of future times, when nations would forget their quarrels and unite to form one great family. We listened to the poet with bated breath. Later, he left us, and went off to the West—and we sent our benedictions to keep him company. But now our gentle guest has become our enemy, infusing his verses with venom, to the delight of the turbulent rabble. From afar comes to us the voice of the embittered poet, that voice that nevertheless we know so well! O God! Illumine his heart with thy truth and restore peace to his soul.

God did not grant Pushkin's prayer. Until the end of his days, Mickiewicz remained the implacable enemy of Tsarist Russia. And when Pushkin, caught in a web of intrigues and suffocating in the atmosphere of the court, was killed in a duel in 1837, Mickiewicz in Paris spoke in praise of the greatest poet Russia had ever known.

Did Mickiewicz hate the Russians? Not at all. The best testimony is to be found in the poem *To my Russian friends*, written in exile. There, he deplores the fate of the Decembrists whom he had formerly known, now dead or deported to Siberia. "Others perhaps have been stricken by an even graver penalty" (he continues). "Perhaps one of you, besmirched by an official function or a medal, has sold his free soul forever to win the Tsar's grace, and bends low in abasement before him." And he concludes in those tones that must have been so painful to Pushkin: "May my bitterness, drawn from the blood and the tears of my homeland, corrode and burn—not you, but your chains. If any one

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of you should complain—his complaint to me will be like the barking of a dog, accustomed to the patient wearing of his collar, and ready to bite the hand which tries to tear that halter off."

The passage quoted opens a long descriptive poem, whose title may be translated as *Epilogue*, and which provoked Pushkin's reply. It is very difficult to give an idea of this work to the Western reader. What comes to my mind is the manner of certain English poets of the 18th century, passages from Pope or from George Crabbe, but the afflatus is more sustained, and a cold violence constantly drives the movement faster. The poem is, in fact, the account of everything that a traveller (the poet himself) sees in Russia in 1824. If one wishes to know how Mickiewicz felt when confronted with that vast continent, it is enough to recall the attitude of Joseph Conrad: for, in all the essentials, their attitudes are the same. They share the same horror of the shapeless or misshapen, the humanly non-elaborated, of the inorganic, of an original and virgin ambiguity.

The landscape itself is full of menace: "A country, empty, white and open, like a page ready to be written upon—can it be that the finger of God will write there, and using people as letters, inscribe that truth of the holy faith: 'the true trophies of this world are sacrifices'? Or will the old enemy of God come with a sword and engrave upon this book: 'the human race must be put in chains, the true trophies of humanity are the exploits of the knout'?" The men whom he met seemed to him to resemble that wild plain: "like the animals and the trees of the north, they are full of vigour and health and strength," but "from their hearts, like subterranean volcanoes, the fire has not yet burned through to their countenances, nor lit their lips with its flame, nor marked their brows with sombre furrows—as it marks the faces of men in the West and the East, faces over which have passed so many legends and events, so many regrets and hopes, that each one is like a monument to the nation." The stranger was moved to pity for the people of the Empire. There was the coming and going of regiments across the plain: but no one asked where he was being sent, or why. The soldiers were Russians, Mongols, Kalmuks; and sometimes "a wretched peasant from some Lithuanian village, homesick and pale, drags himself by with faltering step." St. Petersburg was the scene of a splendid military review: but when the review was over and night came, twenty corpses lay on the snow-covered square—the bodies of soldiers frozen to death, or trampled by the horses, or shot for falling out of step. For man counted for nothing in that country. He had been of no greater account to Peter the Great. Other capitals have risen gradually, thanks to "a deity, a defender, or an industry." It was due solely to the will of Peter that St. Petersburg came into existence: he gave orders "to sink a hundred thousand piles in the quicksands and the marshes and to tread upon the bodies of a hundred thousand peasants." And there one sees him on his horse, poised above the bank of the Neva in a furious rearing motion, "like a cascade frozen rigid upon a precipice." Two young men sheltering under the same cloak (Mickiewicz and Pushkin) approach the base. The author puts words hostile to the sovereign into Pushkin's mouth. "But when the sun of liberty shines forth and the wind from the West warms these regions, what will remain of this torrent of tyranny?" Nevertheless, Pushkin was torn between two inclinations and two loyalties: it is not easy, when one is a Russian, to rid oneself of the fascination exerted by force.

The journey described in the *Epilogue* (which closes Mickiewicz's drama, *The Ancestors*) forms a pendant to the travels of Tocqueville in America. In the heart of the Russian continent can be heard the first rumblings of a future eruption, but no one can foresee what its final result will be, and there is one question that Mickiewicz asks over and over again: what human creatures will inhabit these spaces in the future? All he is able to distinguish is a chrysalis from which may emerge "a brilliantly coloured butterfly," or "a moth, drab progeny of night." The poem, with its extreme sobriety of

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means, is built on the same scale as Pushkin's *The Bronze Horseman*, and not a single line has lost its *poetic* actuality. Its interest is heightened by what it contains of an eyewitness account and a sociological study. The restrictions imposed by the schools of pure poetry have put us on our guard—quite rightly—against rhetoric. But they have also set us on guard against a poem having a subject, and poetry is thereby too often reduced to insignificance.

In Poland today, Mickiewicz's verses fulfil the same rôle as classical architecture, whose superficial aspects are imitated while its spirit is scorned. As to the friendship between the two poets, it is better to acknowledge that the great family of nations whose birth they longed to witness still remains to be founded, rather than to transform them into prophets of the family that does exist.

Word and Action

Mickiewicz, behind the coherence binding his work together as a whole, was a Protean figure; hence the ease with which historians of the most opposed tendencies are able to interpret his writings after their own fashion. His path was not that of the creative artist who continues stubbornly in a single direction. He never repeated his artistic processes, and some private crisis in his life always tore him free whenever he seemed to be settling into a particular mould. When one compares his poems line by line, it is difficult to see, at first glance, how they can have come from the same pen, for they dwell on quite different categories of human experience. Towards his fortieth year, Mickiewicz gave up poetry altogether ("It is more difficult to live honestly for a single day than to write a book," he remarked). It is possible to see him as a man obsessed by ethics—social as well as individual. There are not many poets who, at the full height of their fame, have turned to action instead, and uttered the fateful word, "enough"; and Mickiewicz's case is all the more strange in that he would have been quite capable of producing excellent "*littérature engagée*" in support of his political activities. If there is a line which neatly separates his poetry from the journalism of his middle years, it is probably because he regarded creation and action as two zones, each sacred in its own right, and which should not be confused. We must feel grateful towards him for sparing us the task of making apologies for a great writer who repeats himself towards the end of his life, or turns to pursue the art of partisan rhetoric.

In 1848 he left Paris for Italy, where he founded a Polish Republican Legion. In 1849 he was back in Paris, directing an international socialist review, *La Tribune des Peuples*, of which the authorities took an exceedingly unfavourable view. In 1855 we find him in Constantinople—the Crimean War had begun—where he again set to work to raise a legion, this time against Russia. It was there that he caught cholera and died—after a life of sacrifice, of poverty, and of struggle for the brotherhood of man.

However contradictory his allegiances may seem, the progressive and libertarian impulse of the first half of the 19th century and the influence of utopian socialism give the key to the relative unity of his life. A practising Roman Catholic, Mickiewicz has, literally, provided a livelihood for several generations of biographers faithful to the Church. But in fact, apart from his deep-rooted faith, the connecting thread between his writings and his actions is difficult to follow. He looked upon poetry as an imperfect means of approaching the perfection of things created by God; yet to him it was less valuable than prayer. But action, direct participation in history, could reveal to men the designs planned by their Maker. Mickiewicz was not attracted by Hegel: he thought him too "cold." To this man of passion, the God-Idea of the German philosopher seemed too near to an inert determinism.

Even while he acknowledged the Pope as the vicar of Christ, he sometimes leaned towards a Christian, although not necessarily Catholic, mysticism. In Paris, he read Saint Martin and discovered the German mystics, Jacob Boehme and Angelus Silesius. How is one to place Voltaire, the favourite author of his adolescence, in this context? In fact, all

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he retained of Voltaire was the social criticism of ecclesiastical institutions. There was nothing in him of the libertine. He looked upon the votaries of Reason as imbeciles. Here is a literal translation of a short poem of four lines:

We have driven God from men's hearts, we shall take the possessions he has left; we shall prohibit all writing and speaking about Him; we have a hundred eloquent mouths and hundreds of deadly pens. Why then does this criminal émigré think he can come back?

Here is another, also of four lines:

Satan, although he endows himself with wisdom and strength, knows that he lies, and he does not believe what he says. It pleases him to spread his opinions among men so that, in hearing them from another mouth, he may believe them to be true.

And here another:

When a godless man buries himself in study, take care, for there is an assassin purchasing weapons.

There is an indubitable religious basis to the whole of Mickiewicz's thought. But that did not make him any more ready to love the princes of the Church, whom he accused of taking the side of the rich in this world, of supporting social injustice, and of conspiring with kings against peoples. His audience with Pope Pius IX was very nearly a scandal. He raised his voice to demand the aid of the Pope for the republican movement, and shouted: "The Holy Ghost is beneath the working clothes of the ordinary French people!" Catholic biographies, most of them connected with the Right, have muted Mickiewicz's revolutionary accents, thrusting his internationalism and his ties with the Left (Russian Decembrists and French socialists) into the background.

IT WOULD be wrong, however, to make a static pattern of what, in fact, was a matter of moving lines and nuances. Mickiewicz elaborated his political concepts under the stress of those struggles of which Europe was the theatre. Gradually he moved towards socialism. The list of his collaborators on *La Tribune des Peuples* throws light on his programme. They included, among others, the Fourrierist Lechevalier, three Russians, Voinov, Sazonov, and Golovine, who were followers of Bakunin, two Italians from Mazzini's party, Ricciardi and Frappoli, a Spanish revolutionary leader and follower of Proudhon, Ramon de la Sagra, the Belgian Jean Collins, who drew up the theory of the nationalisation of landed properties, and finally, Marx's friend, Herman Everbeck. In actual fact, this list enlightens us rather on the lack of a definite programme. For Mickiewicz, socialism was principally a state of mind, common to a great many people all of whom put forward different proposals. "We are always in agreement with socialism," he wrote, "wherever it emerges as a development of religious and patriotic sentiments. We leave the discussion of theories to the professional theologians and philosophers." "Modern socialism is merely a manifestation of that sentiment, as old as life itself, a way of feeling that which, in our lives, is incomplete, mutilated, abnormal, and therefore wretched."

Feeling and intuition: Mickiewicz was the first in France to speak of Ralph Waldo Emerson. He cited him frequently in his lectures on the Slavonic literatures, and he gave translations of two of Emerson's essays to *La Tribune des Peuples*: "Religious Man as Reformer" and the "Essay on History." Those anti-Catholic biographers who try to fit Mickiewicz into the rationalist and scientific current which emerged from the Age of Enlightenment are confronted with an arduous task. They see him as sound at the core, but deluded by the mystical prejudices of his age, and assure us that, if he were alive today, he would certainly be a Marxist. One might as well ask what Heraclitus would have thought of Lenin.

In Mickiewicz, one finds a nostalgia for the patriarchal life and the virtues of the old Slavs, and a violent contempt for industrial and commercial civilisation, which kills spiritual values (in that he and Emerson are similar). His warnings addressed to the "bankers and merchants" of the West take on a prophetic aura: "Avid for gold and the

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paper which provides gold, you are supplying the money for the crushing of Liberty; and the days will come when you will lick your gold and chew your paper, and no one will give you bread or water." His anti-capitalism was not part of the picture of a super-industrialised socialist future; Mickiewicz was speaking for those nations not yet sullied by the struggle of each against all; the great sinners in his view were the ruling classes of Western Europe; and in opposition to that Europe, he proclaimed the Slav peoples, or the good old rural American of before the Civil War. In brief, one may liken his convictions to those of democrats in India in the present century, who have tried to spare their country the burden of capitalism, and to base themselves on the values preserved among the people.

The problems confronting anyone who tries to classify Mickiewicz are increased by his cult of Napoléon Bonaparte. The young Pole was fourteen when, in 1812, French troops entered his native province; for him and for all those around him, they were the embodiment of liberty, "the warm wind from the West," bringing an end to the tyranny of the Tsars. The Bonaparte myth played an immense rôle in Poland throughout the 19th century, and even into the 20th; it explains why people wept in the streets of Warsaw in 1940 when they learned of the fall of France. To the Russian liberals, Mickiewicz's friends, Bonaparte presented a more complicated problem: the Emperor brought with him into Russia the inheritance of the French Revolution that they so deeply admired, but he came as an invader, against whom the nation was waging a "patriotic war." Mickiewicz, the Pole, unburdened by these inhibitions, kept his affection for the Bonapartes until the end of his life.

ONE should not fail to note here the interest which Mickiewicz felt for Jewish questions. "To Israel, our elder brother, must go respect, fraternity, assistance on the path towards eternal and terrestrial well-being, and equality of rights for all," he proclaimed in 1848. It will be noted that the most serious character in his epic poem, *Pan Tadeusz*, written between 1832 and 1834, is an old Jew. If one retraces the history of Zionism, one comes upon the figure of one of its first proselytes in Europe, Armand Lévy, a friend of Mickiewicz's and his companion on the journey to Constantinople, where, according to a fully detailed scheme, they planned to organise a Jewish Legion which would fight on the side of the allies against Russia. Here were the reasons underlying this project, as advanced by Mickiewicz in a conversation with Lévy:

> If, on our arrival in Poland, we were able, through the Jewish Legion, to win to our cause the Jews of a synagogue, the peasants would have no doubts about our success, for, knowing the perspicacity of the Israelites, they would say to themselves: our success is assured since the Jews are joining the Revolution. And we would spread like a flow of lava, with our Legion continually growing, from one synagogue to another, from one village to another, to the very heart of Poland and Lithuania.

The plan looks chimerical to us today, since we know how the Crimean War ended. Nevertheless, the basis for such a legion did exist: it consisted of the Russian Jews who had been taken prisoners of war—as well as the Jews who had been specially exempted from military service in the Turkish army. The death of Mickiewicz put an end to the enterprise. The mistrust felt by Turkey towards a Jewish military force which might have been used to assert Jewish claims in Palestine had been the main obstacle in its path; furthermore, the Crimean War was nearing its close. Nevertheless, the attempt, the first of its kind in centuries, deserves a place in the annals of Israel as an independent State. Mickiewicz himself was not a Zionist. Unlike Lévy, he did not wish to see the Jews emigrating: "I should not like the Jews to leave Poland, for the union of Poland and Israel is destined to strengthen our Republic morally, just as the union of Lithuania with Poland strengthened it in former times from the military point of view."

Mickiewicz left a legacy of which he himself, a poor teacher in a provincial town, probably had suspected nothing in his youth.

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Fortified by the habit of obedience, he was the servant of a demanding God.

A Problem for Officialdom

DURING the first ten years of the existence of the Polish People's Republic—1944 to 1954—no one dared to stage Mickiewicz's drama, *The Ancestors*. This is made all the more significant by the fact that *The Ancestors* occupies the same place in the repertory of the Polish theatre as *Faust* does in Germany. One can well understand this reticence on the part of the present directors of cultural policy, however, and indeed it is an involuntary tribute to the explosive force of Mickiewicz's poetry.

Mickiewicz can be regarded as a mystical realist, or a realistic mystic. In his verse drama, scenes marked by cruelly sharp observation and pitiless satire mingle with others of pure enchantment, of ghosts, and of "the marriage of Heaven and Earth." The atmosphere is much closer to that of the Elizabethan theatre than to any dramatic productions of the 19th century. Hence there is an initial obstacle, which only a bold producer and a modern stage designer could overcome. But the thought of licensing such audacious experiments has been sending shivers down the spines of the bureaucrats, who knew that the only style acceptable to their superiors was that of the middle-class theatre of the Victorian epoch. To stage once more those gripping scenes that pre-war productions of *The Ancestors* provided, would have been to succumb to "formalism." But there is something even worse: the subject-matter of the play.

"The Ancestors" is the name given to a pagan rite which the Church tolerated for several centuries among the peasants. This rite survived into the days of Mickiewicz's youth, in the district in which he lived. Through the influence of Christianity, it became associated with All Souls' Day. It consisted in summoning up the souls of the departed, with the aid of magical incantations, and of ensuring that they should join in the feast of the living. This rite provides a *leit-motiv* in the play. The more "modern" part of the action takes place in a Russian prison. A young prisoner has reached a state of exaltation in which all his psychic faculties are engaged (one may compare his ecstasy with that which precedes an attack of epilepsy, which Dostoevsky has described). Here, then, we have a new theme: the illusory omnipotence of the hero, a chained Prometheus who hurls invective (and in what verse!) against a God responsible for the sufferings of the human race. This, in fact, is the temptation sent by the Devil. Rescued from his pride by an unknown priest, the prisoner later becomes a humble fighter for the freedom and happiness of men. The priest also tries to save another prisoner, a boy of fifteen; he goes to see a Russian dignitary, but the great man's sycophants slap his face. Again the scene changes: a ball is in progress at the dignitary's house; and we are shown those elements in Polish society who "collaborate," who smile when the autocrat deigns to smile, and applaud when he deigns to make a witticism, even while the revolutionaries are perishing in the prisons; and then enters, half-crazed, the mother of the young boy: he has committed suicide—or rather, has been helped by his gaolers to jump from the window of his cell. These few elements, which are far from exhausting all that the play contains, should suffice to show how doubtful is its political utility.

In Poland, 1955 was proclaimed as the Mickiewicz festival year. Not to have put on his work for the theatre would have been unthinkable, a proof of the most extreme timidity. Thus, this verse drama became a major problem for the State. *The Ancestors* was at last staged in November. But one wonders how. Let us admit that the struggle against foreign domination can be interpreted as a struggle against Tsarist Russia, and bears no relation to the Russia of today: that is simple enough (although one also wonders how much an audience caught up in the gripping moments of a splendid drama will be aware of this distinction). But in actual fact, patriotic sentiment lies only on the surface of the play, with its many layers of significance. The heart of the problem is the

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hubris shown by the mighty of this world, the pride of human beings whom the Devil uses, only to destroy. The Promethean prisoner revolts against God, but he recognises his error, while the dignitary and all those who fawn upon him are deaf to the warnings and blind to the sarcastic smile of Fate (which is already on the move across the Russian steppes). The true hero of the play is a simple priest. While he sleeps, angels come down (providing a considerable headache for any producer) and say: "He has fallen asleep. Let us raise the soul from his body, as one raises a sleepy child from a golden cradle; let us delicately strip him of the garment of the senses; let us clothe his soul in a light as of dawn, and let us ascend into the sky. Let us bear this luminous soul to the third heaven, and lay the child on the knees of our father." A producer can, of course, by the means at his disposal, minimise the part played by the struggle between Good and Evil, and suggest to the spectators that these are merely superstitions left over from a bygone age (in a country where the churches are always full). But if he does that, the whole drama is lost.

All such anxieties of timorous officials bear no relation to the social problems of our time, and merely give proof of an *a*-historic attitude. It is only through being intimately linked with falsehood that they emerge as an important question.

The Psychoanalysts

HAVING first been tamed by nationalist and Catholic historians, Mickiewicz next became a target, during the decade before the war, for those who look upon sex as the universal key to the knowledge of man. The poet was certainly no misogynist, and a number of highly-spiced anecdotes were thus served up to the public. After the war, it was the turn of the so-called Marxist historians of literature. They set themselves the task of deciphering Mickiewicz and submitting him to a social psychoanalysis: such and such a poem, they proclaimed, does not mean what it says, but testifies to a submerged class-consciousness. (It is only fair to add, however, that thanks to the present "thaw," this method has been publicly attacked in recent months by several eminent poets in Warsaw.) According to a new theory, Mickiewicz expresses the desires of the impoverished petty nobility, who aspire to union with the people, in order to achieve a revolution and create a "bourgeois nation." He was thus a progressive and a revolutionary "for his own time." All this may very well be true: but so much manipulation and arranging of the materials produces a result strangely like those theories of the subconscious put forward by the disciples of Freud: it is all too elaborately built up, and ceases to have any connection with the real life-pattern. The diagnosis holds good so long as one refrains from checking it against the facts. We may be told that one or other of our habits, for example the way we happen to fold our handkerchiefs in two, has some profound significance—and we burst out laughing. The commentators take a text by Mickiewicz and expend gallons of ink upon it—but all that is left is gallons of ink. Mickiewicz's *Ballades*, whose themes he borrowed from superstitious peasant beliefs — rhythmical anecdotes told of an evening round a country fireside, with their ghosts and nymphs and sorcerers—are transformed by such zealous interpreters into a volume in the service of the revolution, for in it the poet paid tribute to folklore. This is not entirely untrue, but one might with as much justice claim that the book was reactionary, since Mickiewicz used it also to attack the Reason of the Age of Enlightenment, and to extol the wisdom of humble folk.

In the laboriously constructed mosaic of these theoreticians, *Pan Tadeusz* takes its place as an "epic of the bourgeois nation in process of formation"; but Mickiewicz's contemporaries convey the impression of having been more intelligent, for what they relished in his work was the serenity of a *divertimento* and the calm tone of one who knows that the world he is describing no longer exists. Doubtless, to look back lovingly upon the past is an unpardonable crime: as grave a

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crime as that of Shakespeare when he turned with nostalgia to the "Merry England" of feudal times. While he was at work upon the poem, in Paris from 1832 to 1834, Mickiewicz, although concerned with the politics of the day, "closed the door on the noises of Europe," and knew the joy of bringing back to life the forests and streams and meadows of his childhood. The humour with which he sets his limited and mediocre heroes in motion is without malice. The tangibility of the images in *Pan Tadeusz* has been compared to the freshness of the English "metaphysical," Thomas Traherne: its setting is one of enchantment, childlike but never childish.

There are two words that the commentators use over and over again: "understanding" and "mature." Mickiewicz did not understand the laws of historical development, for he had the misfortune to be born a little too soon. He shares that misfortune with some billions of men and women who lived on our planet before that era in which science showed us the way towards the Ideal Social Order. Good marks are bestowed on him, as on Flaubert, or Cervantes, or Marlowe—not because of their knowledge, but for their good intentions. Mickiewicz did, indeed, come very near to wisdom at the period when he was following Hegel's lectures in Berlin, in 1829. It may be supposed that he might well have joined the Hegelian Left. Unfortunately, he was not "mature." The poet was not ripe politically to think of condemning revolutionary individualism in *The Ancestors*. On such and such a date (and I do not dispute it), he failed to adopt the attitude that he should have done towards the emancipation of the peasants. He never rid himself of his religious prejudices. He was "immature."

But one troubling question arises. If men in former times, who had no "real" understanding, yet managed to write true poetry and create enduring art, and if those who pride themselves on being superior to Mickiewicz through their understanding of the historical process are artistically sterile—then, perhaps, something is wrong with the universe. Perhaps understanding is the opposite of creation. Perhaps to understand amounts to the same thing as despairing at having nothing to say.

A Strange Legacy

For present-day Poland, Mickiewicz is an embarrassing and even a dangerous possession. To tell the truth, he looms too large in a country of twenty-five million inhabitants. He was, after all, the poet of the multinational *Respublica*, of that vast human reservoir whose inheritance was destroyed by the advent of nationalism. If the Lithuanians sometimes lay claim to him, there is some justice in their claim, for he opens his poem on the past with an invocation to "Lithuania, my homeland." By his marriage to a girl whose family descended from Jews converted to Christianity, he symbolically affirmed his links with the largest Jewish community in the world, one which formerly produced that astonishing movement known as Hasidism, and which gave to humanity, apart from the most brilliant scientists of the 20th century, such men as Bergson, Freud, Chagall—only to be annihilated by the Nazis in a massacre surpassing those of the Assyrian kings. Poland today is the ironic fulfilment of the dreams nurtured by Polish chauvinists: they wanted a homeland cleaned up, stripped of mixtures and minorities—and they have it, but as a dependence of another State.

Certainly, by his language, Mickiewicz belongs purely to the Poles, and takes his place in the tradition that developed in the age of the Reformation—that era of struggles between Protestants and Catholics which coincided with the birth of poetry in the Polish tongue instead of Latin. But he is, uncomfortably, a little above merely literary fame. He has that clarity in his writing that makes him read by all — by workers, and by peasants. Let us dare to say it: this dead writer is alone enough to make Poland unique among her sister-republics. Whoever reads him and grasps his message—and this applies even to the most rigid puritans of the Party—hides a sort of secret in his heart.

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Mickiewicz and Vilno

My personal feeling towards Mickiewicz is one of gratitude. On the school bench at Vilno, which was also the town of the poet's youth, it was through him that I discovered poetry as something infinitely natural and simple, more fitting to man than any other form of expression. In the Latin class, on hearing that legend of the young Ovid who was beaten by his mother for writing verses, and promised (still in verse):

Iam, iam non faciam
Versus, carissima mater

I associated the idea of the "born poet" with Mickiewicz. In that, I was mistaken, for I took the appearance of facility for the absence of effort. Furthermore, at school, every effort was made to make us detest Mickiewicz. But all around our town stretched the same forests and hills that he had described—"Lithuania, my homeland." And when we plunged into the lakes he too had known, his verses came back to us purified of academic dross. Then I found myself in the lecture-rooms of the same university that had counted him among its students. And we visited the cells of the monastery where he had been imprisoned by the Tsar's police, and where he had later placed the action of his *Ancestors*. Our town was plunged into great excitement by a cubist sculptor, who had designed a statue of the poet. The town council, after protracted deliberations, settled on a middle-of-the-road solution: they allowed the statue to be erected, but well out of the way, in the least prominent position, on the bank of the river; so that only young rowing enthusiasts, bent over their oars (the current flowed particularly fast at that point) caught a sideways glance of the gigantic monument, looking like an irregular tower topped by a lion's mane; and the only opportunity the general public had of venting its indignation was during regattas. I sometimes wonder what the new authorities have done with that statue.

Mickiewicz has many lessons to teach those who love him. They know, nevertheless, that to carry him in their hearts is sometimes an unbearable burden. The historic world he created, full of the rending sounds of the strife between Good and Evil; his fable of Satan stamping and burying a single grain of truth in the earth, convinced that once it disappears it will be lost for ever; and his scale of values, in which prayer, action, and silence are set so high—all these provide the modern reader with so many pretexts to disregard the efforts made by men of the 20th century, if they do not measure up to the same standard.

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esoteric: designed for, and understood by, the specially initiated alone.

Philip Sherrard

A Post-Christian Epoch?

WE HAVE recently been told, by Professor C. S. Lewis in his inaugural lecture, *De Descriptione Temporum*, that we live in what he calls a post-Christian epoch. There has been, from somewhere towards the end of the 17th century, a gradual "un-christening" of Europe. All history—which means here, presumably, all European history—falls for us into three periods: the pre-Christian, the Christian, and the post-Christian. Professor Lewis intends these descriptions to cover cultural rather than intellectual periods, but since the course of culture follows that of thought, implicit in these descriptions of the cultural periods of our past is a historical view of our intellectual development. Central to this view is a particular estimation of Christianity. We have been non-Christians (as Pagans), then Christians, and then post-Christians (though not now as Pagans).

It is very simple. Others, like Mr. T. S. Eliot or Miss Dorothy L. Sayers, have been telling us much the same thing. And yet it is very confusing. It is very confusing since it avoids any discrimination between Christianity and that "Christian civilisation" which has been created and preserved through the activity of the Church. It is possible that, if we live in a post-Christian epoch, this is not primarily because from somewhere towards the end of the 17th century we have deserted our "Christian civilisation." It may be because, in creating and preserving this "civilisation," the Church deserted the principles of its own religion, of Christianity itself.

Let us see how this has come about. The early years of Christianity are, in spite of all the research done on them, still obscure, and are likely to remain so. The New Testament is written in Greek—that is, no direct account of the words of Christ, in the language in which He is most likely to have spoken, exists. The relationship between Christianity and the Essenes is not clear. But what is clear is that Christianity stood in the line of a tradition of wisdom and knowledge whose origin is long prior to the historical genesis of Christianity. It is ridiculous to go on applying to that whole period before the historical birth of Christ a term—"pagan"—which came into use somewhere about the 4th century A.D. in order to describe derogatively the peasant sorcerers who preserved, generally in an entirely debased form, something of the magical arts of the ancient world. It is still more ridiculous to use the term "pagan" to describe this ancient world with the implication that a new period, which began with the historical birth of Christ and which we call Christian, marks an intellectual, or religious, advance upon the older period. That we nevertheless continue to do this indicates how far we fail to realise what St. Augustine meant when he said "that which today is called Christian religion existed among the Ancients and has never ceased to exist from the origin of the human race until

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the time when Christ Himself came and men began to call Christian the true religion which already existed beforehand."

Professing Christians are often reluctant to recognise that Christianity is authentic, not because it began something new, but because it maintained and revitalised the "true religion." Also such Christians are often reluctant to recognise that early Christianity had a character which it was later to lose. In its early stage, Christianity did not address itself to all alike. It had an esoteric character, something akin to, if not entirely akin to, that of the mysteries of Eleusis, or Samothrace, or Lemnos. There was a *lex arcani*. The early Fathers are quite clear about this. Origen talks of faith being useful for the masses, and further says that the intelligent are more congenial to God than the unintelligent. He explicitly speaks of secret doctrines that can only be taught to the initiated. Clement of Alexandria says the same thing, and such a secret (and oral) tradition is referred to by Dionysius the Areopagite. Unless one is automatically prevented by a prejudice against all esotericism, one has to admit that early Christianity was as much a teaching (and a rule) that was revealed and confined to Initiates as a religion in which all, whatever their intellectual capacity, could participate. And, again, if one wants further indication of this, it may be found in the fact that Christianity possessed no legislation of the social order, nothing which corresponds to the *shariyah* of Islam. "Render unto Caesar . . ." Christ said, meaning that, just as for the ancient mysteries, the social order was outside His direct concern.

WHAT, however, is also clear is that Christianity, through the Church, did, during these first centuries, become increasingly involved with the social order. In a sense, there was no alternative. Except for an ever decreasing number who were still attached to a surviving traditional form of antiquity, such as Druidism, the West had no tradition. It was faced with the kind of spiritual disintegration with which it is faced today. Christianity had, then, either to retain its esoteric character, which meant that essentially it was reserved to those who were qualified to receive its teaching, or it had to descend into the social order, become exoteric, and open itself to all in an effort to save the West from the dissolution by which it was threatened. It took the latter course. The conversion of Constantine and the Council of Nicaea are, so to speak, the official recognition of a change that has already taken place. The West was, at least for the time being, saved by means of a Church which, whatever its origins, had now become an exoteric, social institution.

There were several consequences of this change. The most important concern the doctrine of the "true religion." It must be stressed, in view of the unfamiliarity of some of these ideas, that the understanding of certain truths requires a level of intelligence which not all possess. Or let it be stated another way. When today we talk of the intellect we generally mean only the reason. We fail, that is, to make a distinction between the one and the other, and we have tended to think that the human reason must be the only source and criterion of all species of knowledge, and that what is not rational is at the same time unintelligible. But it is only during the last few centuries that this identification of the human reason with the intellect has been made. Before that, the distinction is recognised. Intellect is something different from, and higher than, the reason; it is capable of intuiting knowledge that is beyond the reach of reason; it is a divine quality in man. Nicholas of Cusa writes: "It is reason (which is much lower than intellect) that gives names to things in order to distinguish them from one another. This reconciliation of contraries is beyond reason." In other words, through a development of the intellect, man can penetrate into, and grasp, truths of an order higher than that accessible to reason. This development of the intellect is the function of initiation.

But not everyone can be initiated to the same degree. The state of potential development of the intellect in each individual depends upon factors which extend beyond

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the limits of a single life. Reason—a purely individual faculty—is "democratic" in the way that the intellect is not. Thus it is that the increasing tendency to regard reason as the only source and criterion of knowledge has gone hand in hand with an increasing individualism, and hence also with an increasing democratisation of society.

OF COURSE, the Church, in becoming exoteric, did not become democratic in the modern sense. But, descending into the social order, it was compelled to fix the doctrine in clearly defined and limited formulae, in dogma, in such a way that the many, irrespective of their intellectual status, could partake of its teaching. Yet certain truths cannot be fixed in this way. The Church, therefore, in so "codifying" the doctrine that it might be accessible to the many, was led, if not to suppress, at least not to reveal certain truths. It was led to avoid certain terms and certain practices, the significance of which could only be grasped by those competent to do so. Confusions arose between the theoretical and the historical—in relationship, for instance, to Christ's descent into Hell or to His second coming. In other words, in becoming exoteric, in creating a "Christian civilisation," the Church had to conceal, even to deny, certain esoteric elements of the traditional doctrine which could not be fitted into the dogma it was now compelled to formulate.

It is difficult to say whether the purity of the doctrine suffered more in the West or in the East (I am, of course, referring here to the Christian East). One is tempted to say that it suffered more in the West, possibly because the East has always been in closer contact with other traditions whereby it has been less compromised. This is indicated by, among other things, the fact that the West has become more concerned with morality than the East. "It was when the Great Way declined that morality arose." The loss of doctrinal purity, which implies at the same time an intellectual decline, is always marked by increasing emphasis on moral teaching, a matter not of first things but only of what derives from them. It is not accidental that in Protestant countries this emphasis has been carried further than anywhere else, so that there are even, as a final absurdity, attempts made to establish a moral code which has no basis in a religion at all. At the same time, the East has never developed in the same way as the West the cult of suffering, also a consequence of intellectual decline and of a lapse into individualism.

The Western Christian seems to find a curious delight in contemplating the sufferings of Christ and the martyrs and the sorrows of the Virgin. Western iconography is full of sentimental portrayals of the *human* sufferings of Christ, His flagellation, His passion, and so on, not to mention all the martyrs in human agony. Byzantine spiritual masters seldom speak of the historical Christ. They do not dwell upon the terrors and ecstasies of the Cross. They do not ask for Christ's wounds, the stigmata. Similarly, Byzantine art is a way of detachment from terrestrial and merely human concerns. It is a mirroring in image and symbol of the "non-historical" events of the eternal Now. This non-historical attitude to its religion has kept the Eastern Church relatively free from the proselytising and missionary zeal of the Western Church. Moreover, Eastern theology, in ways that cannot be gone into here, has kept closer than Western theology to such genuine metaphysical doctrines as those of the Hindu, or Taoist, or even of the Orphic traditions.

The full effects of this exteriorisation on the part of the Church were not felt so long as there existed within Christianity esoteric orders in which the "true religion" was maintained, and through which those who so desired, and were so qualified, could advance to higher spiritual states than those attainable through the Church itself. Such orders existed, as far as the West is concerned, throughout the Middle Ages, as many things, such as the legends of the Holy Grail and Christian hermetism, testify; and it is to them that the Church owes its vitality during this period. However, the relationship between those orders and the Church seems always

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to have been ambiguous. There was never, or seldom, the accord between esotericism and exotericism which is normal in, for instance, Islam, or for that matter in any complete tradition, so that both co-exist without contradiction. On the contrary, the Christian Church, as soon as it claimed for itself a unique and supreme authority, could not openly or logically admit the existence of orders, the authority of whose members was greater than its own. Just as through its descent into the social realm it had been forced to suppress certain aspects of the traditional doctrine, so, necessarily, one might almost say, it was forced in the end to wage war on those orders in which the doctrine was maintained with greater integrity. The Albigensian crusade, the suppression of the Cathars, the closing of the Order of the Temple, with which two of the greatest figures of Western Christianity, St. Bernard and Dante, had been intimately connected, are all crucial stages in this process. Through it, Christianity in the West rapidly becomes no more than a tradition of an exclusively exoteric character. The Roman Church in this way itself prepared for, even made unavoidable, that further break which was marked by the Reformation. That is why the Roman Church's denunciation of the Reformation is in a sense gratuitous, just as it is gratuitous when Protestants denounce that modern democracy which is no more than a logical consequence of their own attitude.

THE Eastern Church seems to have preserved a more normal relationship between esotericism and exotericism. I am referring to the existence within this Church even perhaps today of what is a genuine Christian initiation going back to the Desert Fathers and so to the Apostles and to Christ —the Hesychast Tradition of Mount Athos and of other such centres deriving from it. Hesychasm is not a mysticism, as many of those who write about it seem to think. Indeed, mysticism—especially as it has been understood in the West from the 14th century onwards—is singularly rare in the Orthodox East. This in itself is an indication that Eastern Christianity has preserved a more normal relationship between esotericism and exotericism than Western Christianity. Initiation, it must be stressed, is not mysticism. Indeed, the latter only arises when initiatory teaching at a higher level breaks down. Unlike initiation, mysticism is more passive than active. Moreover—which is another way of saying the same thing—it lacks the intellectual quality of initiation. Hesychasm has precisely this intellectual quality. It is based upon the idea of an analogy between human and divine life, and it proceeds, by means of a method handed down with the utmost fidelity, through a gradual shedding of the veils which surround it, to a contemplation of the Light of the "Unmanifest." The pursuit of such illumination is often regarded nowadays as a waste of time, or as anti-social, or even as an escape from "real life." But most of us have forgotten, or have never learnt, that nothing confers such benefits on a community as the presence of a spiritual man, and that "Blessed is the kingdom wherein dwells one of them; in an instant they will do more lasting good than all outward actions ever done."

What emerges from all this? The first thing is the point already noted, that in creating and preserving a "Christian civilisation" the Church deserted the principles of its own religion. These principles are universal; that is, they are not the exclusive property of any particular religion, but, on the contrary, any particular religion is authentic only to the degree to which it reflects them. When within a community there exist men who not only are themselves illuminated by these universal principles, but also are able—directly or indirectly—to influence, in their light, every aspect of life, that community is vital. It loses its vitality as it loses contact with the principles. When, in the way that we have seen, the Church, in order to create and to preserve a "Christian civilisation," compromised the doctrine of its own religion (and in that doctrine were reflected, as far as it is possible for them to be so, the great primordial verities) and waged war on those

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whose servant it should have been, it began that process of what Professor Lewis calls "un-christening," or of what might better be called "secularisation," of which the modern western world is the outcome.

That is the first thing which emerges. The second thing which emerges is that the Christian Church is, nevertheless, the one traditional institution which the West does possess. The doctrine it conserves, if only in a truncated and exoteric and latent sense, is yet the one form of the true and universal religion, that which "existed among the Ancients and has never ceased to exist from the origin of the human race," which the West, anyhow during the last fifteen hundred years or so, has known. It would seem then that the Church and western society are intimately connected. It would seem very doubtful whether the latter can exist without the former. It would seem that without the Christian Church the West is bound to lose all value, all coherence. It is bound to disintegrate completely. There would be nothing to stop it. For let it be understood that, in spite of what politicians and other internationalists and world-planners often seem to think, it is the spirit which gives a living unity, and outside the spirit there can be no unity except of that which has lost life. And it would seem that it is only the Church, the one institution in the West which has its principle in the traditional doctrine itself, that is capable, where the West is concerned, of diffusing throughout the social order that spiritual influence which alone can balance the otherwise uncontrollable forces of disruption.

THAT is the second thing which emerges. And the third thing follows: that the Church cannot diffuse this influence unless it possesses it—possesses it, that is, in a more than residual sense. And here we reach the crux, that towards which this whole article has been tending. For the Church will not, and cannot, possess this influence until the normal relationship between esotericism and exotericism, which in the West has been lost, if it every properly existed, at least since the end of the 14th century, is restored. Only the existence of a genuine esotericism, recognised by the Church, can revitalise what has become largely, if not entirely, an exclusively exoteric institution. Such an esotericism would of course in its nature be above "name and form," above particular or exclusive creed or dogma. It would be, that is, universal. Yet since it is difficult, if not impossible, for Westerners to penetrate into the inner sense of the doctrine through symbols and images other than those of their own heritage, and since these are mainly Christian, or have been adopted by Christianity, it is likely that any Western esotericism would be largely Christian in character.

And I say a "genuine esotericism," because obviously those many, often good-intentioned, groups that claim to teach what they call an "esotericism" are, from the point of view here under consideration, quite spurious. It is clear that you cannot pass on what you have not yourself received. And the conditions for receiving a knowledge of the order which would constitute a genuine esotericism are, first, that you possess the necessary qualifications, intellectual and other, and, second, that you receive it from qualified masters, from those, that is, who are themselves fulfilling and continuing, in the fullest sense, an unbroken initiatory line. It is very doubtful whether any of the self-appointed teachers of so-called "Christian esotericism," or of any other "esotericism" in the West, have in fact satisfied these conditions. It is difficult to know how they can be satisfied. It is difficult to know whether, even if they were satisfied, the Church could relinquish its claims to unique authority in a way that would make it impossible for it to become again the social expression, the social organ, of an esoteric teaching. All that can be said is that unless they are satisfied; unless in the West there once more comes into being a spiritual nucleus illuminated by the principles of the true and universal religion and able to radiate its influence over the whole of life, we cannot justifiably talk at all of possessing either a culture, or a tradition, or a civilisation, in any vital sense.

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Dylan Thomas: Elegy

Too proud to die, broken and blind he died
The darkest way, and did not turn away,
A cold kind man brave in his narrow pride

On that darkest day. Oh, forever may
He lie lightly, at last, on the last, crossed
Hill, under the grass, in love, and there grow

Young among the long flocks, and never lie lost
Or still all the numberless days of his death, though
Above all he longed for his mother's breast

Which was rest and dust, and in the kind ground
The darkest justice of death, blind and unblessed.
Let him find no rest but be fathered and found,

I prayed in the crouching room, by his blind bed,
In the muted house, one minute before
Noon, and night, and light. The rivers of the dead

Veined his poor hand I held, and I saw
Through his unseeing eyes to the roots of the sea.
(An old tormented man three-quarters blind,

I am not too proud to cry that He and he
Will never never go out of my mind.
All his bones crying, and poor in all but pain,

Being innocent, he dreaded that he died
Hating his God, but what he was was plain:
An old kind man brave in his burning pride.

The sticks of the house were his; his books he owned.
Even as a baby he had never cried;
Nor did he now, save to his secret wound.

Out of his eyes I saw the last light glide.
Here among the light of the lording sky
An old blind man is with me where I go

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Walking in the meadows of his son's eye
On whom a world of ills came down like snow.
He cried as he died, fearing at last the spheres'

Last sound, the world going out without a breath:
Too proud to cry, too frail to check the tears,
And caught between two nights, blindness and death.

O deepest wound of all that he should die
On that darkest day. Oh, he could hide
The tears out of his eyes, too proud to cry.

Until I die he will not leave my side.)

This unfinished Elegy of Dylan Thomas was given the title "Elegy" in the latest version of the poem after the provisional titles "The Darkest Way" or "Too Proud to Die" or "True Death" had been used in preparatory drafts. Among his papers he left sixty pages of manuscript work towards the poem, including this note:

(1) *Although he was too proud to die, he* did *die, blind, in the most agonizing way but he did not flinch from death & was brave in his pride.*
(2) *In his innocence, & thinking he was God-hating, he never knew that what he was was: an old kind man in his burning pride.*
(3) *Now he will not leave my side, though he is dead.*
(4) *His mother said that as a baby he never cried; nor did he, as an old man; he just cried to his secret wound & his blindness, never aloud.*

The rest of the manuscript work consists of phrases, lines, couplets, and line-endings, and transcripts of the poem in various degrees of completeness. The two most complete versions, which are clearly the latest, are both written in quatrains. One, with no title, has no division into verses, and the second, with the title "Elegy," is divided into verses of three lines. This, to me, seems to be the latest version of all, and seems to hold the final form the poem was to take. The poem extends to the seventeenth line, ending "to the roots of the sea," after which there is a line which is deleted.

The extension of the poem has been built up from the manuscript notes. The lines are all found there, except that two or three have been adjusted to fit the rhyming scheme. "Breath" was an isolated marginal word which I have used in line thirty-four; and "plain," which ends line twenty-three, has been added to "was" without justification from the manuscript. In the third line I have chosen "narrow pride" as against "burning pride" although "burning" occurs more often than "narrow" in the transcripts; but it was "narrow" in that line that he quoted to me from memory when I last saw him.

Of the added lines sixteen are exactly as Dylan Thomas wrote them, and the remainder are only altered to the extent of an inversion or one or two words. Their order might well have been different. The poem might also have been made much longer. It recalls the earlier poem, also written for his father: "Do not go gentle into that good night"; but it is clear that in this last poem Dylan Thomas was attempting something even more immediate and more difficult.

VERNON WATKINS

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Eric C. Gifford

Dinner with the Rabatis

THERE is a loud knock at the door. Since I only moved in two days ago and nobody knows my address, it can only be the man from the Electric Light Company. I put down my paintbrush and open the door unsuspectingly. This is a mistake. Outside are two of the Rabati brothers, immaculate in flowing white Moorish costumes. I am far from immaculate in an old pair of khaki shorts and a liberal coating of blue paint.

They greet me with exquisite old-world courtesy and ignore my appearance. Since they obviously expect to be asked in, there is nothing I can do about it. I stand aside and they climb my steep, narrow stairway. Hussein, the elder, is short and stocky. Abdel Madjid is tall and thin. They are both very dignified. I seat them on two trunks as I have as yet no other furniture, and retire to make some coffee. As we drink it, they exclaim over the beauties of my one floor and roof apartment; it would fit inside the gatehouse of their own vast, sprawling palace further up the hill.

They have been searching all over Tangier for me for the last two days in order to ask me to dinner tonight. They are entertaining the new Nicaraguan Minister and his wife, and I simply must not refuse now that they have at last found me. They are expecting their guests at eight. It is now nearly seven. I have plenty of time to change and their car is waiting for us in the square round the corner. I wonder what Emily Post would suggest, but Abdel Madjid says firmly that they will go up on the roof and admire the view while I change.

It takes me a good ten minutes with turpentine, pumice stone, and soap to remove the paint. By this time I am raw but reasonably clean. My clothes are crumpled from being packed, but I finally get dressed and we set out. A black Cadillac is waiting to run us the few hundred yards up the hill. It drops us in front of the long blank wall of the Rabati Palace.

The gatehouse is filled with a rabble of manservants. Inside are gardens with flowering trees and shrubs. Fountains plash into marble basins. On either side and in front are pavilions in various states of disrepair. Away to the left I can see the glass roof of the ballroom rising like a giant hot-house above the trees. The dinner is to take place in a room off one of the inner courtyards, where another fountain drips with a pleasant, soothing sound into a moss-grown basin.

The room is long and narrow and disproportionately high, as are all Moorish rooms. The floor is covered with beautiful rugs laid one on top of another, so that they form a soft bed into which the feet sink. The walls are hung to a height of about six feet with pink and purple velvet patterned in the form of Moorish arches, each arch outlined in gold braid. Beneath this, and running all round the room, is a narrow, low divan, heaped with cushions covered in flowered cretonnes.

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I kick off my shoes at the door. It is bad manners to enter a carpeted room without doing this. Abdel Latif, the eldest Rabati brother, is waiting to receive his guests. He is the head of the family since the death of the old ex-Vizier a few years ago. He is a tall, saturnine man in the late forties. I see that I am the first arrival, but I have hardly been seated when I am followed by Sir Richard Johnson. Sir Richard is a little man with the face of an elderly eunuch. He is reputed to keep a harem of small girls in his house on the Mountain. This causes a great deal of speculation in Tangier society and many otherwise respectable ladies fish for invitations in order to have a look around.

A Moorish guest arrives on his heels. He is a wizened little old man with a long beard dyed bright red with henna. His hands are fleshless claws, very white, with dappled yellow markings. His eyes are red-rimmed and watering, the pupils so faded as to be almost indistinguishable from the jaundiced whites. He shakes all the time and must be very old. He is introduced as the Pasha of Fez Djedid.

Lady Hornby-Speare and the Marquise de la Tour d'Argent arrive together. I know them both. Lady Hornby-Speare is a large woman with a deep voice, who lives on the Mountain and keeps cats. She usually wears tweed skirts and brogues, but tonight she seems larger than ever in flowered chiffon. The Marquise is one of those brittle and elegant Frenchwomen who stop having birthdays at thirty and become almost indestructible at sixty. She must now be in the eighties. She looks much the same as she did when I first saw her twenty years ago. Her heels are as high, her figure as slim and well corseted, and her face is the same unsmiling, enamelled mask. Only with her walk can she do nothing, it has become an old woman's totter.

It is now nearly eight-thirty and there is still no sign of the Nicaraguans. I see Abdel Latif look furtively at his watch. We have been served with cocktails, that is to say with half glasses of neat gin, Gordon's I am glad to note, each glass containing a green olive speared with a toothpick. The Moors are not drinking at all, I suppose out of deference to the Pasha. I know that both Hussein and Abdel Madjid like a spot when they are alone, and I daresay the old Pasha does too. But no one is going to give himself away in front of the others, although the ban on drinking is not a Koranic law but merely a later instruction of the Prophet aimed at drunkenness. Second rounds are offered but only Sir Richard accepts.

The question of his private life is evidently engaging the thoughts of more than one person. Abdel Madjid leans towards me and asks in a penetrating whisper: "Sir Johnson, does he really have house full of small womens?" Lady Hornby-Speare tackles the question by indirection. "But Sir Richard, you must find it very lonely all alone in that great house of yours. You should marry some nice gairl who would look after you."

At last the Nicaraguans arrive. The Minister is a distinguished-looking elderly man with a pointed grey beard. The Señora de Villaverde y Ortega is a good thirty years younger. Evidently nobody has warned her that she will have to sit on a low divan. She is dressed in a slinky, black velvet affair which would make sitting difficult under any circumstances. It is very tight, very low-necked, and is lavishly besprinkled with rhinestones. She has to be lowered and swung into place by her husband and Hussein, while I, and I am sure everyone else, wait for something to split.

Since the newcomers refuse cocktails, mint tea is now served. A large tray in filigree white metal is brought in. It has short legs attached, and so forms a table. It holds a number of glasses decorated with flower designs in gold, a large metal teapot with a conical cover, a large metal box, also in filigree, containing sugar, a smaller one containing tea, and a large bowl of fresh mint. The whole is covered with a fine muslin cloth embroidered with flowers, which the servant whisks off and takes away. She then brings a brass kettle on an elaborate charcoal brazier and sets it beside the tray. Steam is rising from the spout of the kettle.

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Mint tea is an inevitable part of any Moorish entertaining, from the highest to the lowest. Its preparation is as elaborate as the Japanese tea-making ceremony. Green China tea is used, with the addition of a bunch of fresh green mint and quantities of cone sugar which used to be used years ago for jam-making and which since my childhood I have never seen except in Morocco. The resulting brew is hot, sweet, and pungent, and in its way surprisingly refreshing. It is, though, hardly the thing to sandwich between neat gin and a large dinner.

I WISH the meal would arrive. Conversation has already become desultory. We have discussed the latest Tangier gossip, the wind, which has blown steadily at gale force for the past five days, the possible effect on Tangier of opening Ceuta as a free port, and the Spanish attitude towards Gibraltar. Local politics have so far been skilfully avoided. Individually we have spoken, the Nicaraguan Minister of Guatemala, his wife of Paris, Lady Hornby-Speare of her cats. She wishes I could send the cats from my roof to play in her lovely garden with her own dear pussies. So do I. The Marquise has talked of her new coiffeur and the Pasha of his constipation. There seems little else to say. The Pasha has convinced himself that I am a doctor and keeps asking me for a prescription. "His guts no move for seven days," Abdel Madjid confides to me. "Bowels, young man, bowels," puts in Lady Hornby-Speare in her deep voice, and then for once in her life looks confused and mutters to herself. I end by asking for a pen and paper and write in French: "One large dose of castor oil to be taken at bedtime." I hope it doesn't kill him.

At last a servant comes in and takes away the tea tray. Another servant brings in a low round table of unpolished white wood and puts it down in front of us. There is a general stir. The Rabatis get up and start arranging cushions around the table. Two people can sit on the divan but the rest will have to move out on to the cushions. It is decided to leave the Pasha and the Señora de Villaverde on the divan as being the most difficult to move, and the rest of us settle ourselves more or less uncomfortably round the table. A young negress dressed in pink and yellow silk and wearing a lime green turban, brings in a silver ewer and basin and an arm-load of face towels. Abdel Latif makes hissing signals in the direction of the Señora. Lady Hornby-Speare explains to her that she is going to have to eat with her fingers and had better wash her hands. "Got to learn to go native here, you know. I expect you'll find it strange at first, but we old Morocco hands are used to it." I remember Lady Hornby-Speare's arrival some three years ago and wonder how long it takes to become an old Morocco hand.

The Señora dabbles her long red fingernails under the thin stream of water from the ewer and is handed one of the towels. "You keep the towel and spread it for the bits to drop on," Lady Hornby-Speare informs her in a loud voice. "You'll find you need it."

The ewer passes on to the Marquise who does a professional job with a cake of soap she finds in the basin. At last we are all washed and sit back hopefully. Two large baskets in multicoloured raffia are brought in. They have high conical covers and are bound in green leather. They contain hot, round loaves of native bread divided into quarters. Hussein puts two quarter loaves in front of each of us. Besides being eaten, broken pieces of this bread will serve as forks, being used to pick small pieces of food out of the dish.

Almost immediately the young negress is back again bearing a large earthenware *tajin* dish. This is a dish with a high conical cover like the bread baskets, in which the food is both cooked and served. She puts it down in the centre of the table and lifts the cover. A cloud of steam floats up towards the ceiling and we see that the first dish is a stew of chicken with green olives.

"*B'ism Illah*, in the name of God," says Abdel Latif, pushing back the wide sleeve on his right arm and poising his hand over the dish. "*B'ism Illah*," mutter the other Moors piously and likewise prepare for action.

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Before they have time to get going the Señora has uttered a little cry of delight and seized a chicken leg in both hands and is bringing it up to her mouth. But she has not been able to get her teeth into it when Lady Hornby-Speare's voice booms out imperiously. "Drop that!" We all look at her agape. Is the food poisoned? Are we dining with the Borgias? The Señora remains with the chicken leg suspended in mid-air. A drop of gravy falls on to a rhinestone and from there trickles slowly on to the black velvet.

"Only the first two fingers and thumb of the right hand." Lady Hornby-Speare is intent on her victim and obviously unconscious of the consternation she has caused. "Only the right hand is used in eating. The left hand is unclean. It is used . . ." She lowers her voice by one decibel. "It is used for . . . you know what."

Abdel Latif turns to the Nicaraguan Minister, whose face is a mask. "Lady Hornby-Speare is referring to the quaint custom in our country of using only the right hand in eating," he says suavely in Spanish. "Naturally we do not expect our distinguished foreign guests to follow these outmoded traditions."

The Minister nods and smiles and then glares at his wife, who is still holding the chicken leg. She puts it hurriedly back into the dish. Her dress is ruined, but on reflection I decide that that is no loss. Everybody relaxes, everyone that is to say save the Pasha, who I now notice has been eating away unconcernedly, apparently unaware of any contretemps. There is already quite a heap of chicken bones on the table in front of him.

THE stewed chicken is very good when we finally get to eating it. When we have finished about half, the dish is whisked away. From us it will go to the women and children, from them to the servants. After that the bones and anything else that remains will feed the dogs and cats.

It is followed immediately by a roast leg of mutton. I know from experience that this will be too hot to touch. It is also very difficult to dismantle with one hand, although in fact the bone may be held with the left hand in order to obtain leverage. It is much better to let someone else get it started. Even if one's host doesn't pass one some broken bits himself, which he will almost certainly do, by the time several people have pulled at it there are sure to be some loose ends which will break off neatly.

The Señora is sulking and has eaten no chicken. The Marquise on the contrary has eaten with the intent concentration of the old, and her heap of bones nearly rivals that of the Pasha. As I expected, Abdel Madjid has passed me two crisp outside pieces of mutton. This is all I want. Heaven knows how many more dishes are coming, and one is expected to at least taste them all. The only thing to do is just to pick at the first few. Of course it is possible to get caught out this way. I remember occasions when I have done precisely that and found that that was the end of the meal. Tonight, however, I have a feeling that this is going to be a long affair. Abdel Latif has persuaded the Señora to eat some of the mutton by plying her with small broken pieces. She is now sitting licking her fingers daintily like a cat.

The next dish is one of my favourites, pigeon baked in flaky pastry. The Pasha evidently likes it too, to judge by the speed with which he gets going. The Minister is wearing a decoration suspended on a long blue ribbon. This is causing him some trouble, as when he leans forward to pop some morsel into his mouth, it swings across the table. He has now hooked up a piece of bread, which he detaches crossly.

Conversation has ceased entirely. Everyone is too intent on eating or on the mere mechanics of getting the food safely into their mouths. Roast chickens follow the pigeon, then a saddle of mutton with mushrooms, stewed mutton with vegetables, cubes of beef cooked with honey and spices, and then chicken stewed with almonds, raisins, and saffron.

We are all beginning to sweat slightly. The Pasha has let out a number of approving belches, which is the height of politeness,

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since it bears obvious witness to the richness of the host's food. After the chicken I manage to work up a resounding belch. Everyone looks gratified except the Nicaraguans. They look appalled. Abdel Madjid pats me on the knee and says, "*El hamdu lillah*, praise be to God. You like the food, my dear?"

I always like their food, except for the time they gave me porridge with twenty-year-old butter as a special treat. The butter is kept in an earthenware jar not unlike a Greek amphora, with a piece of rawhide tied over the top. It is considered fit to eat at from twelve to fifteen years. At twenty it has developed a real bouquet. It is definitely an acquired taste. I have not yet acquired it. I assure Abdel Madjid that the meal is delicious, and the other guests take the opportunity of chiming in. For a few minutes conversation becomes general.

A SERVANT I haven't seen before appears with the next dish. She is a very large middle-aged negress with muscular arms and the build of an all-in wrestler. She is carrying the largest *tajin* dish I have ever seen, set in a silver filigree base. She is probably the only one in the kitchen who can carry it.

"Now we have the *k'skoo*," says Abdel Madjid in my ear. This is the famous couscous without which no North African meal is complete. It is made from wheat flour rubbed between the fingers until it forms tiny pellets. In these decadent times couscous may be bought ready prepared in packets and probably untouched by hand. The grains are steamed and heaped around the dish like rice. A large hollow is left in the centre into which a stew is poured. Whether the dish is delicious or dry and unappetising depends very largely on the contents of this stew. I note that tonight it is chicken with baby carrots and green peas.

Spoons are placed in front of the foreign guests. This is a wise precaution. The correct method of eating couscous is in the fingers. A little heap of the grains is scooped up and deftly rolled between the closed fingers and thumb. Then, with a quick flick of the wrist, the resulting ball is popped neatly into the mouth. Very few foreigners acquire the knack. Usually they can't succeed in rolling the grains into a ball, but if they do, that is only half the battle. Either the ball disintegrates before they can get it to their mouths, scattering greasy spots down their shirt-fronts, or else in their eagerness they aim too high or too low, landing the sticky mess on to nose or chin. I have tried to eat couscous correctly so I know. Now I happily ply a spoon like the veriest newcomer.

We each stake out a concession, making a hole in the grain in front of us and scooping some chicken and vegetables into it, and set to work. The Pasha is breathing asthmatically and a drop of sweat has gathered on the tip of his aquiline nose. I find my gaze fascinated by it. The Señora has only picked at the last few courses. She hasn't spoken to Lady Hornby-Speare since the chicken episode. The Marquise and the Pasha hardly speak at all, they are much too busy eating. The Minister is talking local politics to Abdel Latif, who is looking acutely embarrassed. He has large interests in the French Zone and never knows when what he says may be misinterpreted and repeated, which could be awkward for him. Sir Richard looks half asleep but is eating steadily. Lady Hornby-Speare is telling us an interminable story concerning the extreme cleverness of one of her cats. I have cramp in my legs and am glad that the meal is nearly over.

The couscous is always the last major course. We will now have sweet cakes or fruit; perhaps both. It is only fruit. Water melon, pink and shining, cut up into cubes. We pop pieces into our mouths and sit back to juggle with the seeds. At last it is over, the ewer and basin are brought round once again and we clean up. The foreigners content themselves with washing their hands. The Moors wash their mouths out with soap also, blowing bubbles and gargling happily.

When they are quite finished, the large negress reappears with a cloth, throws it over the remains and picks up the table. We struggle up from our cushions and stretch ourselves. For some time I have wanted to put up my hand and ask to leave the room.

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I take advantage of the general movement to try and slip away unobserved. I think I have made it when I am halted in the doorway by a loud cry from Hussein. "Mr. Eric, you want to go to the W.C.?" I find myself blushing, which is ridiculous. He insists on sending a servant to carry a lamp for me.

When I get back, more mint tea has been brought. Sir Richard and the Pasha are both asleep. This is quite good manners in Moorish society. Like belching, it is a compliment to the richness of the meal. It is also a sign that one feels at home. The Spanish *mi casa es su casa*, my house is your house, is of Moorish origin. With the Moors it usually means what it says. A guest may sleep as long as he likes. When he wakes up, if the party is still going on, he takes up the conversation where he left off.

Lady Hornby-Speare pats the divan for me to come and sit beside her. She wants to know if I am working on another book. She hopes I won't put her in it. I know she would be bitterly disappointed if I didn't, but refrain from telling her so. The Marquise is nodding and will be asleep in another minute if nothing happens. The Minister is still trying to talk politics with Abdel Latif, who is showing great skill in saying nothing. The Señora is desperately trying to catch her husband's eye. I have a feeling that the party is over.

The Minister at last allows his eye to be caught and clears his throat. His wife stirs and tries to get up. Abdel Latif looks relieved, but makes polite surely-you-haven't-got-to-leave-so-early noises. The Minister says he has a heavy day ahead of him tomorrow.

Between them they heave the Señora to her feet. Her dress has split down the side and there are some grains of couscous among the rhinestones. They say a round of goodbyes to those of us who are still awake and Abdel Latif accompanies them out.

When he returns Sir Richard is awake and we are all on our feet. All that is save the Pasha, who is sleeping like a child. We leave him there. There are more polite protests from the brothers, but we are all ready to leave.

The moon is full and the garden sharply black and silver. There is a smell of roses. As we pass the fountain I trail my hand in the water. It is icy cold. The Marquise offers me a lift in her car but I prefer to walk. It is after midnight and the Kasbah is deserted. In the square in front of the old Sultan's palace it is almost as bright as day. The bearded night-watchman wishes me goodnight and I go on slowly down the hill.

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NOTES FROM A DIARY

Invitation to Warsaw

The President, and the Secretary of the Warsaw Branch of Writers' Union, both wrote inviting me for a week to Warsaw to attend the *soirée* commemorating the centenary of the national poet of Poland, Adam Mickiewicz. Not knowing what kind of myth I might be approving, I answered that I would gladly attend if I were allowed to speak for a few minutes on a topic: *The Uses to which we should put the Reputations of the Dead.*

"My theme," I wrote, "would be that if we use the dead to illustrate the ideology of the living, we turn our contemporary existence into nothing but a prison of our own contemporary ideas: a prison on the walls of which the pictures of the dead are posters projecting the propaganda of our own ideologies. . . . We should regard the dead as points from which to criticise our own contemporary existence, instead of as projections of our own contemporary existence."

The secretary of the society, Anton Slonimsky, telephoned from Warsaw that the *soirée* would not be an occasion for a controversial address.

While awaiting this answer, I consulted refugees in London and Paris, and found them fairly equally divided about the usefulness of such visits. If one accepts, who uses whom, they asked? The visitor to a country behind the Iron Curtain may be a participant in struggles he is unaware of—for instance, propaganda to persuade refugees to return to their country of origin. When Graham Greene went to Poland, refugees in Paris and London might—it was argued—be more easily persuaded that in returning to their own country they would not be cut off from all contacts with the West.

On the other hand, many refugees felt that the advantages of such visits outweigh their disadvantages. To my mind, the essential thing has always seemed that there should be open and free discussion between hosts and guests. I declined to go just to attend a celebration, but telegraphed that I would be glad to do so if and when such discussion could be arranged. But I was delighted to hear that Laurie Lee, who has no political commitments, was going.

We Love the Dead

Czeslaw Milosz (who contributes a discussion of Mickiewicz to this number of ENCOUNTER) wrote some brilliant reflections on the Mickiewicz celebrations, opening with the exclamation: "We love the dead!" He raised the important question whether in our time such centennial festivities should not be abolished altogether.

Can we today be sure that when we invite the dead to be the objects of celebrations they are not guests in the same sense as other deceived travellers who go to countries in the grip of ideologies?

Two questions ought to be asked. (1) Do we select from the past in order to find figures there which illustrate the ideological theses of the present? or (2) do we study the past with the will to discover situations and lives in past history from whose viewpoint we can judge and criticise our contemporary situation?

If we do (i) then such anniversaries are ways of using the past in order to illustrate contemporary aims. If we do (ii) then we may discover through the past ways of escape from that bondage within the ideas of our own time which is characteristic of us all, on whichever side of the Iron Curtain.

Conscious and Unconscious History

With the Communist Manifesto, not only did Philosophy become infected with the idea of an overriding contemporary historic will, but political leaders of the extreme right as well as of the left could demand of people that they should realise in every aspect of their behaviour a consciousness of the purpose of contemporary history. At the same time, for the ideologists, the whole pre-Communist era became "unconscious history," in which there were nevertheless a few figures who (without knowing why) realised in their work the "historic forces" that finally lead to the rule of the proletariat.

From this point of view, the lives and actions of great men in the past illustrate themes which contemporary Marxist analysts develop. Within their historic context these past figures were "correct" though all their ideas and beliefs may today have a significance the opposite from that which they themselves felt or thought or intended. It was "correct" for Dante to believe in God, and for Shakespeare to support an aristocratic ideal, if doing so put them

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on the side of what can today be interpreted after the event as "the progressive forces."

The dead are very fortunate. No one in a Communist country today enjoys the opportunity they had of being wrong and right at the same time. "We love the dead." And perhaps we envy them.

The Prison of Contemporary Analysis

As Marxism is something that goes on inside the minds of Marxists (and what this may be at any given moment is decided by the toughest Communist ideologist) we see in our time some wry miracles of the human mind containing history within ideology. We are surrounded by kings of infinite space, and after the recent Soviet State visit to Asia, with Mr. Khrushchev's lecturing on the Taj Mahal and Burmese Pagodas, one might paraphrase Blake:

> To see a World in a Grain of Sand,
> And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
> Study the palm of Khrushchev's hand
> And Bulganin's for an hour.

However, not only Marxism, but every analytic system which translates the past into the terms of its own interpretations robs past values of their inner self-consistency in their own time, and makes them appear significant only within some system of contemporary ideas. Thus Freudian interpretations can work in the same way as Marxist. Leonardo da Vinci becomes comprehensible to the Freudian if you understand that his painting of Mother and Child signifies not what he thought it did but what Freud thought it does.

Ideological Convertibility

The analytic approach to the past—although it has given valuable results—always runs the risk of turning the study of the past into a specialised science where analysis becomes more important than the object analysed, and tends to replace it. Each work "explicated" becomes part of a system which develops independently as Critical Analysis. That students today should often read the criticism of works before they turn to the works themselves is not a criticism of the students: it is a criticism of modern criticism.

And Reconvertibility

The dead and their works should be regarded not as illustrations of the ideologies of the living but as coherent indissoluble unities situated in past time. The sun and moon, like Dante and Shakespeare, are far removed in time when their light reaches us, but we do not, for that reason, consider that the principles according to which they exist are "historically correct for their time," though not for ours. The stellar system, though many light-years distant from us, is not there to illustrate themes set by the earth. On the contrary, it has its own concretions which criticise ours—point out that the earth is a mere dot by the side of the sun, for example. In the same way, the organised realities in Dante and Shakespeare do not lead up to our contemporary development, they look at and criticise it. All co-exist. But in order to understand this we have to see the reality of the dead as in some way absolute to itself, and impossible to dissolve into our ideas unless we are to be imprisoned within our own present. To talk about "the suspension of disbelief" in approaching the faiths of the past, already betrays the analytic attitude which attempts to convert past beliefs into *our* ideas, and then finds them unacceptable. We have to accept that past belief was a fact, like a rock. And probably what is required of us today is something far more complex than the so-called complexities of analysis: we need both to employ the analytic method and reject it. To analyse the work, and to realise at the same time that it maintains its own intrinsic reality, like sun and moon, outside the analysis. What matters is contact with the dead and their works as existent —co-existent—fact, outside any attempt to resolve them into our ideas.

Co-existence with the Past and Present

All this throws some light on co-existence. Co-existence means accepting things as they are whether their are-ness is on the other side of the world or five centuries back in history. No system which insists on analysing all pasts and presents outside itself into its own ideology can co-exist with any other present or past. Communist Marxists will not be able to co-exist with geography until they have learned to co-exist with history: and there is not the slightest sign that they wish to co-exist with either.

However, even without Marxism, the co-existence which is talked of so glibly today, is in fact an almost unattainable ideal. Through the excessive practice of analytic methods and the widespread belief that the analysis of the fact is more significant than the fact itself, every country, every culture, every school of thought has become isolated within its own terms. This makes the acceptance of simple facts as facts extremely difficult: facts such as that Dante believed in God, Shakespeare in an aristocratic principle, and that Mickiewicz held certain views about Russians.

Stephen Spender

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Wyndham Lewis

Pish-Tush

A Story

MISS JEVONS, like all women who live by themselves, dwelt in a stuffy aroma of platonic domesticity. She had long understood that she now would never be joined by a man, so had built up a neutral atmosphere which took the place of the male. She was coming to the end of the middle years, but psychologically she inhabited a private youth of her own, which her lonely condition almost imposed upon her. If she had worked in an office, or something of that kind, she would have conformed to the view of herself formed by her associates; but as it was she remained young, since there was none there to make her feel anything else. And this was in no way contradicted by the fact that as her hair lost its colour, she rather dreamily supplied a little artificial colour, which she bought in a bottle.

Physically she was tall and fairly slender, with a small head, by no means unattractive. She was a faded, sandy blonde, with a straight sensitive mouth, and inquisitive pale blue eyes.

As a woman with a small fortune, and a nature not too aggressive, she had a fair number of friends, mostly living in London, survivals from her youthful life. Only two of these lived in Chelsea, one of them richer, the other poorer, than herself.

On the other side of the road a large red house, with large flashing windows, was reflecting the sun into her sitting-room. She sat near the window, her long neck, thin, but not quite so gracefully thin as she imagined it, arched out; and her eyes were directed downwards, where, upon her lap, a handful of money was collected. Now pushing these coins about with her long thin fingers, she was searching for something which had disappeared. Suddenly a very pleasant, curiously unalarming voice reached her ears.

"The half-crown is lying an inch or two to the right of your left foot." There was a short silence, during which Miss Jevons sat looking at the floor. The missing half-crown was where the voice had said it was.

"I must apologise for addressing you, Miss Jevons. I am a very harmless *spook*, but I am quite aware that I am not supposed to speak. My position is rather like that of a mouse." Frances Jevons sat rigidly, without moving. She was frightened. Bending forward she picked up the half-crown; it was her instinct to remove without delay what had been an excuse for communication. The money had better be put away—another half-crown might fall to the floor. She scooped up the coins and poured them into her bag.

Speak she would not, whatever happened. This low, gentle voice had sounded just as though it came from somewhere or something just above the armchair; she only possessed one. It might, of course, have come from a dictaphone, though how such a device. . . .

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In about a quarter of an hour Barbara would be arriving. She wished she had been coming sooner. What had the voice said . . . it compared itself with a mouse; it said it was not supposed to speak. If she heard that voice again she would telephone to Mr. Letheridge and get him to come up . . . but now the silence began to frighten her, and she considered the advisability of leaving the room, and waiting for her friend in some other room, perhaps the kitchen. A shriek ready to shape itself in her throat, she forced herself to look at the stretch of wall just above the armchair. Nothing was there. Picking up a novel, she turned to the marked page and began reading: "Captain Storford's lithe figure could be seen moving in the stable, he could be heard tapping his riding-boot with his crop, and with the free hand he was twirling his moustache. Would he come out and confront Eric?" Even Captain Storford —about to horsewhip, as he was, his contemptible rival—even he was not able to draw her away into his fictional world. She sat reading the words over and over again. Finally she closed the book. Was the spook, or whatever it was, watching her? Or had this something, like the mouse, a nest beneath the floor-boards or in the wall? She sat bunched up; the clock ticked louder than usual. Suddenly there was a small sound which might have been caused by a piece of furniture, if it was not something less material. When she heard the front door-bell she sprang up and with as much noise as possible made her way to the door.

"My dear! You don't know how glad I am to see you! Something very odd has just been occurring." Frances Jevons's eyes protruded a shade more than usual, and she began speaking a little breathlessly. But Barbara answered that something far more extraordinary (she felt sure) had been happening to *her*. And, without waiting to enquire what her friend's sensation was, Barbara plunged immediately into an account of the startling event which she had been so sure would outclass her friend's sensational bagatelle. It interested Frances; she readily gave up her "spook." Twenty minutes before, she could not have believed with what ease that subject could be dropped. Barbara's piece of hot gossip occupied most of the conversation during a not very prolonged visit.

SHE had joined a new club; she wanted Frances to go to lunch there in a few days' time. Barbara had an old friend of theirs lunching with her, and Frances agreed to be there too. That settled, the visitor left. Frances went back to her room determined to be very firm about any further voice having no material identity.

The Voice had plenty of opportunities during the next few days of renewing its supernatural contact, but it was not until the fourth day that Frances Jevons again heard herself addressed from nowhere. It was about ten in the evening; she was sitting, her legs outstretched, on the sofa, and had just taken up a detective story, when, so softly that she could only just hear it, the voice began.

"I hope I am not intruding. Tell me if I am. It is so boring being a spook, though, I know that is no excuse. Because one is bored oneself that is no reason why one should bore other people."

That, thought Frances, was excellent reasoning. Her first instinct was to jump up and say to this immaterial intruder: "Yes, you are intruding, and I will put up with no more of it!" But Frances had to admit that she was inquisitive about this unseen being who spoke so gently and apologetically. The Voice was cultivated, perhaps Edwardian. It occurred to Frances that, should it be her lot to experience a survival of this embarrassing kind, what she would find most boring would be the enforced silence.

"I shrink from gossip with another spook," the voice told her; "it is not a pleasant thought, but suppose you were in this position—of being a creepily surviving intelligence, allowed a voice but nothing else. I would like to bet that you would prefer silence to intercourse with another shadowy voice."

The living woman tried to imagine herself in that predicament. She said to herself that she knew what *she* would do. She would

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try and find some sympathetic male spook to swap impressions with.

The voice appeared to pause, so that she might have time to reflect.

"I *did*," the Unknown continued, "strike up an acquaintance with a gentleman in the same pass as myself—just a voice and nothing else."

"Can you read my thoughts?" Frances Jevons was shocked to hear herself asking. She bit her lip and did not know which way to look.

"No, not really," came the soft tones of the Voice, "only a kind of telepathy, you know."

Suddenly an unexplained noise occurred—there was a kind of crack, and several things fell to the floor from the somewhat overloaded table. Frances jumped violently.

"I am sorry," the Voice protested. "These things are really not my fault. I am obliged to adjust my nonentity in an aggressively overcrowded space. I am so sorry if I frightened you, Miss Jevons, I was trying to make my voice a little more resonant by throwing it into the bell-shaped hollow of the lampshade. I am so terribly sorry."

There was an angry silence.

"I hope you will replace what you have knocked down," said Frances crossly.

"I will ask you to let me do that while you are out of the room. Such an operation is apt to be a little noisy."

There was a short pause, involving several sharp sounds.

"Go away, please," Frances said. "Do go away."

"Oh please don't send me away. I was about to tell you what occurred when I spoke to a man spook. It was typical. He was a strong and silent man—especially silent. No one would know he was there, and he attached great importance to that. I was talking about Oxford in the old days; we had both been up there. I can't keep absolutely still. I waved a little as I spoke, and a vase crashed on the floor. He was furious. He attempted to make me leave the room, the only warm one in the house, and sent me to Coventry. The people we were with were quite amusing, and one day I gave an involuntary titter. When they left the room this stickler for silence rushed at me. 'We are not supposed to be here. Can you not realise that?' I told him I was as quiet as a mouse usually. But he would not be pacified."

"Is there anyone else here?" Frances asked.

"No, Miss Jevons. We are quite by ourselves."

"What a wretched life you live . . . if it is a life," said Frances.

"To exist, even like a fly on the wall, is life. To be able to *think*, a great deal. I used to fear extinction."

"You are easy to please."

"I did not say I was *pleased* with my lot. I hope you will not think me fresh, Miss Jevons, if I introduce myself. My name is Constance, Mrs. Constance Blakely. My husband was in the Foreign Service. In the F.O., you know. We had no children."

Constance exhaled a small sad sigh, and fell silent.

"Tell me how you became a spook, as you call it?" Frances asked.

"I gave up the ghost, as they say, in the course of a pneumonia epidemic. How does one die? One rather violently goes to sleep. But I happened to wake up. I quickly realised that I could see, could move myself anywhere I liked, just by willing; and I was aware that a diaphanous nonentity accompanied me. What this is I understand no more today than then. I am the energy that it takes to move a bird about. I am the centre of a will—a will to see, to move, to speak . . . and the will weighs something—depending on how much one is willing. This is as much as I am able to define. I am an ariel, only confined to houses. It seems natural to this queer mode of existence to be in a house. I should not be comfortable . . . oh, in the garden." She appeared to shiver a little, or at least she made a noise resembling that. Then she continued. "Have you not sometimes felt something less than material, detached from the temporal? Then you felt for a moment what I feel all the time." Constance paused. Frances was not asleep, as the Voice had thought she might be. Then this strange monologue began again.

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"I have been in this room for nearly two years."

Frances shuddered.

"There is nothing to be frightened about. My presence here is no more alarming than having a phonograph and a number of discs. It would be ridiculous no doubt to say that I am just the same as you, except that I cannot make love, eat or drink, write a letter to a friend, dance or ride—indeed, *do* anything. All I can do is to talk. And I cannot do that much either, because anyone I would care to talk to is terrified of me! How silly that is I have tried to show. The 'spook' is perfectly harmless—except for the poltergeist; we do not borrow money from you—as the living do; we do not infect you with disease, as the living do, nor do we do any of the other disagreeable things the living are apt to do."

There was a silence. Then Frances spoke.

"You *feel* as well as think. What are your feelings about the people you . . . live amongst?"

There was a faint laugh. "Are you fishing for a compliment? Anyhow, I can answer you easily. My usual reaction to people is what it used to be before I found myself in my present odd position. Usually, I find myself *bored*. Let me add, because I am moved to converse with you it is a proof that I am interested. For instance, I am much entertained by your way of handling that vulgar little creature who blew in the other morning."

"Who was that? Oh I know—old Brewster, was it?" Frances gave a short laugh. "You heard that, did you?"

"Yes, I had just come in. I had been downstairs."

There was a great coolness in Frances's voice as she enquired whether the Voice was welcomed by Mr. Letheridge in the downstairs flat. With mirthful intonations the Voice answered that it would not venture to speak within the earshot of Mr. Letheridge, who, if he heard the sound of a spook, especially a female spook, would have a fit.

"I assure you, Miss Jevons, that your co-operation would immediately be sought with a view to exterminating the supernatural nuisances. . . . Mr. Letheridge is, of all the people I know, the one who inspires me with the deepest terror." Frances did not respond; but it was obvious that she was somehow relieved.

This was the introductory phase in Frances Jevons's association with Constance. Thenceforth she was accustomed to consult Constance on certain questions, and to share with her the day's absurdities. It did not take long for "Constance" to become the mode of address on one side, "Frances" on the other.

THUS it was that the first of a series of *contretemps* occurred, in about ten days' time.

The *Evening Standard* was handed in every day at about five-thirty by an oldish man, who would have something to say on the banner headlines, "He's hung for it, and time too!" or "Polar Star was the Queen's horse. That's 'er second this week." Frances always assumed a rather bluff and blustering voice as she gave him the penny ha'penny. By six o'clock she was usually judiciously ready to defend hotly her opinion on this or that. Late Night News and Constance were apt to be contradictory. This evening it was Homosexuality which was the big issue. Frances, for once, was on the Judge's side. She fired a broadside across the tea-table, in favour of heavy sentences for accosting. "I don't see why he should get away with it because he has a nice tenor voice. It's not such a good voice as all that, either!"

Outside the window was a verandah running the full breadth of the house. This was approached by a stone stairway leading up to the front door from the small square garden provided for by the flat underneath. The occupant of the ground-floor flat often mounted these steps, and, instead of knocking at the front door, would walk along her verandah and tap on the window to announce his presence; or sometimes, as now, he would call to her through the open window.

"Hear, hear, Miss Jevons," rang out the fine masculine voice of Lionel. "I'd give them the cat! A public beating—in a row! I would whip them till they bled!"

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"How sadistic!" breathed Constance.

"I didn't hear you." Lionel coughed suspiciously under the window. "I beg your pardon for intruding. But it is rather important. Might I have a word with you?"

"Coming!" cried Frances, as she crashed around her bristling sofa. A minute later she was in her hall, facing the tall figure of her neighbour. These encounters always occurred in this way; he would not seek to enter, nor would she invite him to do so. He would knock on her door, to bring to her attention some outrage which he felt she should (1) know about, or (2) take some steps, with him, to put a stop to.

His face showed that, on this occasion, he was ruffled in some way, and he was holding something back. (He had heard the voice of Constance when she had observed how *sadistic* he sounded.) But he had a big outrageous blemish upon the peace and decency of their dual domicile to bring to her attention—for, after all, what happened to him happened in a sense also to her. An injury to one he was inclined to regard as one done to both; and now he had something very outrageous to impart to her.

"This is intolerable, a matter for the police!" he protested. "The abominable Bouncer (the next-door dog)—that filthy animal—how dare he behave as he does! He has left his visiting-card, if you please, in the centre of my doorstep."

Frances looked scandalised. "Bouncer ought to be shot!" she exclaimed. "I would shoot him through the letter-box if he came near my doorstep!"

An enthusiastic growl came from Lionel; she had been particularly emphatic, and even picturesquely dynamic, in order to cover up the presence of a Voice, which Mr. Letheridge would suppose was a visitor. In a warmly apologetic tone, and glancing towards her sitting-room, he said: "I say, I hope you will forgive me for barging in on your conversation." But Frances Jevons told him it was nothing—that, as she was by herself, there was no intrusion.

(She pretended not to have heard the word "conversation.") Then, as a secondary matter, but one which it was impossible to ignore, had Miss Jevons noticed an invasion of barrows coming from the slums of Victoria—bringing with them house-to-house pests, knocking on doors and trying to sell one articles which are usually a side-line of the milkman, from bedding to petticoats, from razor blades to electric irons. Yes, of course she must have noticed an infesting of hawkers and street-traders, and of persons soliciting at doors, with bundles of feather-brooms. Phew! beastly things—full of fleas; one had jumped on him from a lot of dirty feathers. And they filled the streets with incomprehensible cries! Sometimes they were accompanied by dogs. As he mentioned the fleas and the dogs Miss Jevons swelled with indignation and shook herself, scratching a little in the region of her ribs. She expressed herself rather forcibly, by word and by gesture, about Chelsea being used as a hunting-ground by such marauders from the neighbourhood of the Vauxhall Bridge Road or the disreputable markets nestling against Victoria where the Station premises looked round to the south. And, his eyes flashing almost as much as if he had been discussing the lawlessness of Bouncer, Lionel Letheridge said: "They should mobilise a body of Vigilantes, with truncheons and torches. I'd join them like a shot!"

BACK in her sitting-room the two girls had a good laugh about Pish-Tush, as was Constance's name for the man downstairs.

But Pish-Tush paused at the top of the stairs, and the hoots of mirth and the disembodied merriment counterpointing the robust hysteria of Frances caused him to frown. "It is rather unnecessary for Miss Jevons to go back to her friend exploding with laughter!" he said to himself. "She has always taken a very serious view of the invasion of our territory by that arch canine pest, Bouncer. It has always seemed to me that we stood together regarding his flagrant trespasses and depredations, I almost think encouraged by Mr. Parkinson whose head I shall certainly punch one of these fine days.

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Of course, there was mirth in Miss Jevons's room as I arrived, but . . . well, I will put the best construction on it that I can."

And Mr. Pish-Tush made his way gravely down the steps, loudly clearing his throat.

In her sitting-room Frances Jevons, wiping her eyes after having let herself go on the subject of Pish-Tush, made the following remarks.

"This is not a maisonnette; these two flats are constructed in such a way, standing as they do apart from anything else, one on top of the other, that you find yourself perpetually involved with the neighbour upstairs, or downstairs, as the case may be. Since he lives downstairs, and as the garden falls to his lot, old Pish-Tush is in the nature of things a little in my pocket, not to say in my hair. His temperament keeps him boiling with rage from morning till night. I can hardly cold-shoulder him and object to holding a conference at least once a day—always on my doorstep, for he refuses to come inside, especially at the Christmas season, when mistletoe is apt to be hanging over every door, particularly in the flat of a single lady! . . . It is a most awkwardly built house for a single man. I try and convince him that nothing would induce me to get into bed with him. But Pish-Tush—I must call him that, I think!—remains sceptical. The fact that I am unmarried and he is unmarried. . . ."

Constance, from her abstract electro-magnetic perch, gave forth wails of polite hysteria. "Frances, it is humiliating for you, but you must bow the head to the master sex. If I were in your position I would inform him I was a hermaphrodite, but it was best to call me *Miss*."

"*Then* I am quite sure that Pish-Tush would be so embarrassed that he would blush every time he saw me. I prefer to remain the single woman."

A little later that evening Frances was going out to dinner (having apologised to Constance for being so piggish, but she had to stoke up). As she was descending the steps, she became aware that Pish-Tush's door was open and he was obviously speaking on the telephone.

"Disgraceful!" . . . "Outrageous!" . . . "Scandalous!" he fired indignantly into the mouthpiece, obviously for Mr. Parkinson who must be at the other end (the owner of Bouncer living in the house next door). When she returned two hours later the excitable Lionel Letheridge was lying in wait for her just inside the gate. His face was full of indignation—the word "disgraceful" was waiting just inside his lips ready to rush out.

"I say, Miss Jevons, that fellow Parkinson has gone a step too far—I think you will agree with me when I have told you. He called me an ill-educated sausage-nose. . . ."

"I say!" exclaimed Frances.

"But wait a minute! He said that because I could not afford a dog of my own I made the lives of other dog-owners a misery. To which I replied that the next time I saw him I would punch his sausage."

"I say! That was pretty straight from the shoulder! Besides, your nose is a very elegant sausage—in fact I have never seen a man with a nose less like the article of food mentioned by Mr. Parkinson. His nose is rather like the inflamed beak of a buzzard!"

"I say, Miss Jevons, what a capital eye you have!"

"But you must not assail that inflamed beak. You are at least twice his size. You must not kill Mr. Parkinson."

"That is all very well, Miss Jevons, but am I to be insulted by the master on top of submitting to the maximum nastiness of the dog?"

They growled together in the shadow of the hedge; and then Frances, looking, with her unusual height and dramatically ragged way of dressing, like a female Don Quixote, stalked up to her flat.

If Pish-Tush was going to "sock" the neighbour because he was so small, what should her attitude be? Constance was still there, and, after answering enquiries regarding her digestion, Frances sought enlightenment of the ghostly oracle. The answer was that Pish-Tush did not impress Constance physically, although he was a big man, and if there was any chance of Mr. Parkinson blacking his eye, then that would be great

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fun—especially if Bouncer would join in and succeed in removing the seat of Pish-Tush's trousers. Frances laughed a little hollowly; for the thorough-going distaste felt by Constance for her neighbour did not entirely please her. She felt that a certain restraint was appropriate to those no longer of this life.

A FEW days later Frances Jevons had a shock. She half-rose and reached across to a small bookshelf and placed her hand on something like a piece of fish. But the dead fish was alive, for the dead fish shuddered; and it was not solid, or rather it was a slice of another dimension—for there was nothing there that was visible. She snatched her hand away and sat with the hand, which had had the disagreeable experience, nursed in the palm of the other.

"That was me," the apologetic voice of the invisible Constance was heard. "I am so sorry. It was like putting your hand down on to the fishmonger's chilly wares."

"Yes, a little bit," Frances agreed.

The voice of the unseen was so civilised—what was said so acceptable to human senses: but something reminiscent of this was a familiar experience—for instance, when some coal-black or yellow-Asian face speaks with the cultivated voice of some Oxford or Cambridge undergraduate. But a cold slice of fish was a disagreeable novelty. That would take some getting used to.

"Constance, I *hear* you, and I feel perfectly at home: if I could *see* you what should I feel like?"

"Well, in the first place you could not see me. I have been left my Voice, but nothing to go round it—not above it—nor underneath it."

"What are your powers of movement? Can you move through walls?"

"Oh no, Frances, nothing miraculous like that. We can get under a door, provided it is not fitted with those india-rubber things to exclude draughts. Think of a very light substance, whose shape and, in a way, whose density we control. Our *centre* has no visible shape. Where we go this evanescent substance goes, I do not quite know why, but we cannot dispense with it. It is the shadowy equivalent of a body. We can let it float like a cloud, or we can fill it up or concentrate it into a substance we are able to pull through a keyhole—provided no key is there. I cannot explain this voice or brain or will of mine."

"Is there no use you can make of this volatile aura?"

"Oh well, yes—if you can call it a *use*. We could deliver a slap, for instance; we can weave it into a *rope*, with which we can attach ourselves to a jet aeroplane. We could tie up a bunch of flowers or act as a plume for a knight in armour at a carnival."

"I should have thought you would be too unsubstantial for that."

"We can do quite a lot with our wispiness if we will it to be so."

THE friendship between the two women grew, until the personality of Constance acquired something almost like a plastic reality for Frances. Frances shared with her shadowy friend the interest in the males who came her way, possibly (with luck) developing a flirtatious coloration; or, in one or two other cases, figures from her not too remote past put in an appearance.

In the case of the latter, having their roots in the younger years—this big, vibrant, tossing body, still in life, unlike her friend—there were amorous entanglements, yes, orgasms which tended to make the presence of Constance embarrassing.

When it was all over, however, frank conversations ensued, not without boastfulness on the part of Frances Jevons. Constance's tact was admirable, bowing with delicate humility, as the woman of the past should, who hated the live organism, with the flattery of one who could no longer be *corps à corps* with the male. She saw Frances vaunt her fascinations—this in spite of the fact that she was now almost a sexagenarian, and reveal her five-foot-ten of not so enticing *décolletage* to the femininity sharing her intimacies. Frances would coyly whisper, "Jack is coming this evening—mustn't look." And the other would answer, "I promise." Though secretly the once elegant Constance regarded

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her friend's "harem," as she thought of it, as a very moth-eaten lot.

But Mr. Lionel Letheridge, when he would stump up and station himself outside his neighbour's window, seething with indignation, would find, as often as not, that Miss Jevons was in entertaining conversation with some woman, where formerly she would be by herself. As the days and weeks passed Pish-Tush grew more and more aggrieved. He developed a deep and aggressive jealousy for this female, whom he regarded as an unknown interloper, very seriously interfering with his daily dramatics with his woman neighbour.

"Miss Jevons, have you seen the news?"

Squawking "I will come to the door," Frances stalked out of the room, after a wink for Constance. As she flung the front door open, Pish-Tush crashed out: "Awfully sorry. Hope I am not interrupting anything. There is great news—I thought you would like to hear it."

"I am devoured with curiosity." Frances produced an inquisitive grimace.

"Well, that unspeakable cad Parkinson has been fined heavily by the West London magistrate—an unusually big fine. Bouncer paid a visit to the charming front garden of a noble lord—you know, that Georgian house in Mayhew Street. He was caught in the act by the butler."

"What fun!" Frances said.

"Yes. The magistrate deplored that no restraint was imposed upon so incontinent a dog. He described Mr. Parkinson as one of those pests whose imagination was defective, and who should not be allowed to possess a domestic animal."

On another occasion he asked Frances if she had anyone living with her. And then, at last, mounting as usual, and placing himself rather quietly outside her window, he overheard a female voice saying: "I should tell old Pish-Tush, if I were you, not to appeal to you about everything—but only when it is something of interest to you."

"Oh, it doesn't matter," he heard the voice of Miss Jevons. "It probably is a good thing, a watch-dog."

He moved softly over to the front door and knocked. When she came he said: "You have no one with you?" and when she answered, "No," he said: "Would you mind if I stepped into your sitting-room for a moment. There is an echo. . . ."

She went back into her room and he followed, speaking as he advanced. He looked round the room. "It is strange . . . I could have sworn . . ."

"Nosey Parker! Busybody!" Constance spoke quite distinctly.

"So there is someone here who is invisible . . . and not remarkable for her politeness." Flushing scarlet, he retired from the room, flashing angry questions at Frances as he went.

"There was someone in the room, as you see . . ." she replied.

"No, I *saw* nothing," Pish-Tush broke in.

"Ah, she was hiding."

"Very successfully!" Her neighbour stepped out of the house with that parting shot.

IT WAS some days before Frances saw her neighbour again. She was just about to open the gate when she saw him on the other side of it, raising his hat and stepping aside to allow her to come through.

Moving forward, she thanked him. "I'm just on my way to *Sugar and Spice*, not too late I hope for my daily *Procea*."

Mr. Letheridge told her he had just come from that enterprising shop. "They seemed to have plenty still of everything."

She observed that it was in danger of becoming too popular; and they chatted a little in a very genial mood. This urbane conversation she lived to regret. Two days later the disarming softening up of the *Sugar and Spice* talk was still effective. She was without any real resistance at the moment her neighbour sprang his great surprise.

It was at eleven in the morning that the test came. She was engaged, as was so often the case, in heated discussion with the domestic spook, the subject usually originating in rapes, murders, escapes from Broadmoor, divorces, scandals in Court circles, from reports in the morning newspapers.

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Frances was very shrill: an imperious knocking at the front door drew her, shrieking comic protests, across the room and out into the hall. When she threw the door open she found the invariable Pish-Tush, his face full of enterprise and of pleasurable expectation. He was nursing some contraption in both hands, held up against his stomach.

"I want you to allow me to spray several of your rooms with this. It is a substance which is perfectly harmless . . . to *us*; but its properties have a most salutary effect where" (he coughed) "certain undesirable guests are concerned."

And as he spoke he advanced into the house, looking to left and right, and then, talking all the time, he quickly stepped into the sitting-room, Frances, wide-eyed and vaguely alarmed, retreating as he advanced.

"I would much prefer it if we fixed a day. You can't possibly go in *there* . . ."

"Oh just a little gentle spraying." But he was already inside and spraying away for all he was worth. "It is by no means disagreeable," he was saying.

". . . On the contrary—on the contrary, it is vile! Come out at once, Mr. Letheridge! Do you *hear*?—at once!" she stamped her foot.

"Rubbish—rubbish!" Squirt—squirt, he went, rapidly moving around the room.

"It's D.D.T., that's what it is!" cried Frances, waving a handkerchief in front of her face. "Mr. Letheridge! Please leave my house at once. This is perfectly disgraceful. How dare you come in here, spraying that disgusting stuff . . ."

"Nonsense, nonsense, Miss Jevons!" he boomed, as he pushed his way out into the hall. It's just what you want. One has to get used to it—but it's jolly good stuff! Jolly—good—stuff!" he shouted, as he charged on into the dining-room, on the other side of the front door.

Frances remained in the hall, exploding with more and more determined protests. Something brushed past her head.

"Goodbye, dear, goodbye." Constance's voice sounded hoarse—it was almost breaking. Flushed and excited, the red countenance of Pish-Tush burst out into the hall. "Ah, I see something!" he exclaimed, his spray pointing up into the air.

Frances struck at his sprayer, almost knocking it out of his hand.

"I say!" barked Pish-Tush.

"I will send for the police, Mr. Letheridge! I shall sue you for this! I am serious."

Spraying as he went, triumphant, regardless of feminine threats, he reached the back door, which led into the lane at the rear, an iron staircase leading up to the tradesmen's entrance. But as he reached the end of the passage there was an agonised scream, and he jumped away from something. He stood looking down at his foot, exclaiming: "Well, I'm damned! You heard that?"

He turned quickly towards Frances, his face radiant but perspiring.

"How about that, Miss Jevons? That was escaping under the door." He came towards her. "Can you say now, Miss Jevons, that this purification was not necessary? It is the one thing vermin abominate. You should thank me, shouldn't you? You don't approve, do you, of phantoms—all that supernatural vermin, larking around dwellings—making their home among us? . . . I shouldn't be surprised if that was the voice which called me *Busybody*."

"That is precisely what you are, you interfering idiot! Go! Get out of my house! And never come near it again!"

"You will learn to thank me for this. It is thoroughly insanitary. Association with those surviving from another time is unwholesome—very unwholesome. They feed upon the vitality of those who tolerate them. They are parasites. The whole question ought to receive the attention of Parliament."

Lionel Letheridge looked more owlish than ever. His eyes and mouth conspired to hypnotise with owlish authority.

"Why don't you learn not to meddle with other people's lives? You private policeman—you unpaid detective! Don't come to me any more with your idiotic stories! I will make you pay for this invasion of my premises. Now, will you go out of that door . . . or must I summon the police?"

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Surprised and crestfallen, without a Pish or a Tush left in him, Frances Jevons's neighbour left, a misunderstood man, a public-spirited hero whose unselfish deeds were strangely misinterpreted.

"She'll get over it," he told himself," and I shall no longer hear her confabulating with some most undesirable spirit."

Things began arriving the following day for Frances's neighbour. There was a parcel from Harrods, there was a parcel from Sketchley's, and a registered letter. Frances refused to take anything in for Mr. Letheridge, as formerly she had been ready to do.

SHE sat miserably in her ill-smelling sitting-room, feeling incredibly lonely. At length she decided to have a change of scene. She telephoned to the Rev. Joynson, who occupied a pleasant little vicarage not far from Ware, and arranged to pay him a visit beginning on that very day. This was an elderly cousin with whom, along with Sadie Joynson, she and her sister would sometimes visit the seaside, especially a place near Aldeburgh, where another cousin lived.

She remained in the country for about a week, at the end of which time the effects of the piratic behaviour of Pish-Tush were beginning to be forgotten. The appalling stink left behind by that aggressive busybody, that too, she felt, must have lost its pungency, only the fact that he had driven out the sympathetic Constance would remain to distress and anger her.

So she decided to go back to Chelsea, determined to keep Lionel Letheridge in his place, and severely to discourage his trespassing in future. Accordingly, she said farewell to her cousin on the following morning, and by about five o'clock that evening was once more in her now dismal flat. About five-thirty her telephone rang. It was an unfamiliar voice; and then she learnt that it was a Detective Inspector, who asked if he might come round and see her at once. He declined to reveal what his business was, and she awaited his arrival with sinister foreboding—about something quite shapeless—for she could not imagine what his errand could be. When the man arrived he informed her that a week ago her neighbour, Mr. Lionel Letheridge, had been found dead under mysterious circumstances. They had forced an entrance into her flat the day before, as a result of what a certain General Goffer-Smith had said.

The Detective Inspector, whose name was Manners, at once enquired if she could throw any light upon what had happened. It was evident that her departure had seemed to them a curious circumstance, occurring as it did at precisely that time.

Frances Jevons was anything but deficient in the comic sense; but she also realised that she was a serious suspect. She saw that if she gave an exact account of what had happened, prior to her departure for the country, that might be regarded as material to build up a case. Nevertheless as she had nothing to hide she considered it best to relate (more or less exactly) what had passed. She began by giving an outline of her relations with Pish-Tush, and then (without, of course, mentioning anything in connection with the invisible Constance) described how Mr. Letheridge had, with his usual schoolboyish abandon, persuaded her to allow him to spray her rooms with some concoction he had been recommended by his friend General Goffer-Smith. The smell was decidedly disagreeable; on an impulse, to get a little fresh air into her lungs, she had gone to the Vicarage of a relative in Hertfordshire.

The Detective Inspector explained how they found Mr. Letheridge. He was in bed, in his night clothes, and a deep dark incision stretched all around his neck. This had been the cause of death. There was no indication whatever of how this came about. The flat had not been broken into, and no trace of any kind remained as to what implement was used to effect the strangulation, nor had they any other clue so far: although they had made all those enquiries which, up to the present, had suggested themselves. Frances shuddered—watched by the Detective with stolid alertness.

"You shudder, Miss Jevons," he remarked dryly.

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"Yes," said Frances. "Didn't you, when first you saw this rather gruesome sight?"

Detective Inspector Manners had attained to his relatively envied position in his branch of the Police Service by tenacious industry, and he had his likes and dislikes. Of cleverness he did not approve. He looked sharply at Frances Jevons. But, try as he would in the ensuing weeks, he could not add Miss Jevons's name to the list of British murderesses. Badger and ferret, badger and ferret as he would, he was unable to unearth a single fact incriminating her.

As she lay in bed, that first night, Frances shuddered again. She was convinced that she could tell the Police how that foolish man received that deep incision all around the neck—done, they believed, with some malleable metal cord: Constance had described how she could, if she wished, make out of her aura a cord. And the back door of her neighbour's flat had a limited amount of space between itself and the floor level. She knew how Constance had made her exit from her flat, and there was every reason to believe she could make her way into *his* in a similar fashion. She could imagine her lying in wait under his bed. How she would introduce the silken cord around his neck Frances did not venture to surmise.

Perhaps the encirclement might begin with a gentle and immaterial gliding around that part of the neck where it was possible to effect a junction; gradually take on substance, until it became a most deadly instrument of destruction, pulled tighter and tighter by that mysterious indomitable will of which Constance had spoken as the essence of her being. It was easy to imagine the wretched Lionel Letheridge struggling wildly upon the bed with this invisible enemy. She shuddered again. Oh dear! She reflected that not until she had left this neighbourhood, yes, and had a long holiday too (perhaps she would go to Africa)—not until then, if ever, would she be herself again.

A Thought From Propertius

II. XVI. 47–54

Good news we bring the expectant generation
  Our banquet broke no bones: be this our due!
So kiss me, love; enjoy our mortal station
  When all that you can give are still too few.

As leaves that wither from a blackened ceiling
  And on the wine-bowl's midnight ocean fume
Are we who put our trust in this deep feeling
  Regardless of the hour which seals our doom.

translated by Cyril Connolly

Haec certe merito poterunt laudare mindres
  Laeserunt nullos pocula nostra Deos.
Tu modo, dum licet, hunc fructum ne desere vitae;
  omnia si dederis oscula, pauca datis.
Ac veluti folia arentes liquere corollas
  Quae passim calathis strata natare vides:
Sic nobis, qui nunc magnum speramus amantes
  Forsitan includet crastina fata dies.

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Henry Moore—Pro and Con

I. PRO: *Patrick Heron*

IT IS understandable that those who have long admired Henry Moore's sculpture should now be in a mood to reconsider their attitude to the only contemporary British artist whose genuine, as distinct from his popular, reputation is in fact world-wide. This mood, I say, is understandable (it has shown itself clearly in a number of reviews of Moore's recent shows). But it is unfortunate, if not reprehensible: and for many reasons—some of which I will explore now, on the occasion of the publication of a second number of the Lund Humphries monograph.

Firstly, the present is arbitrary as the moment for such radical revaluation. There is really no better reason for undertaking this now than that the extent of Moore's fame has become an irritant to many who swim in his wake. It is precisely because he has made so conspicuous a contribution towards changing the æsthetic climate that surrounds us that his personal responsibility for the change is less obvious to those whom it has sustained. But there is a place for constancy, even in our judgments about contemporary art. Before we all decide that Moore, Picasso, or for that matter Eliot are not quite what we thought they were, let us try projecting ourselves imaginatively into the artistic scene as it was before they *altered* it. And further, it should be possible to keep in mind the distinction between one's personal reaction to an artist's work at a given moment and one's knowledge of the significance of that artist in the impersonal context of the achievement of his period. We all get saturated by, satiated with, the works of a contemporary artist of genius. Our necessary rejection of him, at that point, is something very natural; but, equally, it is something very subjective. To gauge his stature one must exercise faculties not wholly directed by one's current feeling.

The second reason why I deprecate the present fashion for "thinking again" about Moore is that, in a country where there is so little tradition or authority in the field of the visual arts, it is playing once again into the hands of the majority—which, in England,

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Twice in this winter's series of Reith Lectures, the course of Dr. Nikolaus Pevsner's argument hinged on his belief that "the greatest sculptor now alive" was Henry Moore. For saying this, Dr. Pevsner was roundly rebuked in the correspondence columns of "The Listener" by Mr. Douglas Cooper. Mr. Cooper is by no means alone among serious critics in holding that Moore's importance on the international scene has been overestimated by his more ardent admirers. Moore, indeed, has possibly aroused more controversy among the critics—as distinct from controversy between apologists and the general public—than any other sculptor of our time.

We publish here complementary articles by two of the younger English critics which state the case for and against Moore. Mr. Patrick Heron, who appears for the defence, is a former art critic of "The New Statesman and Nation" and the author of "The Changing Forms of Art," besides being a well-known painter. Mr. Basil Taylor, who appears for the prosecution, is art critic of "The Spectator" and Librarian of the Royal College of Art. The publication of these articles is occasioned by the recent appearance of a monograph recording Moore's work during the last few years, "Henry Moore, Vol II. Sculpture and Drawings Since 1948" (Lund Humphries. 63s.)—Ed.

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is uninformed, inert, Philistine, and smug. The international reputation of Moore has helped to improve the morale of our younger painters and sculptors—perhaps more than any other single factor in recent years. Yet no sooner is this exceptional and beneficent prestige acknowledged—in Paris, New York, Athens, Venice, São Paolo, or Amsterdam—than those at home who should be capable of nursing our renascent hopes, of which that prestige is a symbol, start proving their open-mindedness, their lack of narrow æsthetic nationalism, and their fairness to the as-yet-unestablished younger artists, by pecking this new authoritative reputation to bits. Doubtless their instinct is all very democratic and protestant. Perhaps it is impossible to wish things otherwise: certainly, many would hold that criticism must be relentless, jungle-wise. The real misfortune lies in our national lack of conviction in æsthetics. The modern movement here—if I may thus designate the mere handful of good painters and sculptors we possess—is too slender in numbers, too lacking in momentum and in popular support for it to be capable of sustaining itself indefinitely in face of the typical national indifference and the "original" doubts of supposedly informed critics.

But my third reason for disagreeing with Moore's new critics is personal. It is simply that I think they are mistaken in their judgment. Myself, I do not believe that Moore's powers are declining; or that his last two exhibitions at the Leicester Galleries represented a temporary aberration; or that we have been mistaken all along in rating him so highly. In fact I am as tempted now to say that he is the best sculptor living as I have ever been. Picasso is possibly Moore's most serious rival—although there is always Brancusi to think of. But it seems to me that whereas Moore always speaks in the language of three-dimensional forms-in-space, Picasso's magnificently effective, startling, even hallucinatory images, whether bronze, iron, wood, or plaster, are all essentially an extension of a painter's concept of plastic imagery. Picasso's sculpture consists frequently of gestures in a solid material which nevertheless seem to me devoid of the most profound experience of three-dimensional form.

It is not that Picasso in his sculpture merely creates telling, gesticulatory profile-forms—like Braque or Zadkine. Picasso's *Cock* of 1932 (it is in the Tate Gallery's permanent collection) gyrates in space; its tail-feathers, its crested head, its claws, and its opening wings strike out in all directions, inhabit a volume of air that seems incommensurate with the small, spiky thinness of these forms themselves. Yet the fact remains that this *Cock* is most impressive *as silhouette* and not as related volumes; it does not matter from which of three dozen viewpoints one regards it, the result is the same — one is aware of the various parts of the bird as being merely the solid equivalents of those bold, splashy movements of Picasso's big brush, striking the simplified bird-image on to a white canvas. For instance, the banana-like tail-feathers; the claws like a man's fingers inside a suede glove; the comb like a piece of dried fungus; the bird's body, a neat, little, simplified bomb-shape, with the wings attached like limp football bladders—all these, as paint, would be vastly effective; but as solid forms in space they are too summary, too simplified, and lacking in axial subtlety. Their interest lies in their spiking of the air around them: they presage the open sculpture of today; but their *actual* form, their *actual* volume does not fascinate. I think it is true to say of most of the forms in Picasso's sculpture that they impress one mainly by virtue of their volatile "drawing"—which might, as I say, be as well, if not better, expressed on canvas. Then, we are also moved by the intensely evocative formal analogies he unearths (the ox-head which consists solely of a bicycle saddle attached to bicycle handlebars, for horns, is an example). But again, these analogies are not essentially sculptural in conception; paint might express them just as completely. And lastly, the forms in Picasso's sculpture excite by virtue of the evident spontaneity of their construction.

Yet this very spontaneity palls in the long run. This is because spontaneity is not always a virtue in a sculptor. One comes to regard Picasso's sculpture as being too much in the nature of a sketch; a diversion; an exceedingly brilliant painter's hobby. The test of sculpture is not what it can immediately communicate; is not its first impact. It is what we feel about a work after half an hour of walking round, up to and away from it. Picasso's sculpture is always immediately exciting; but Moore's is always most impressive

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when the cumulative effect of much viewing begins to register with one. Thus Picasso's sculpture excites in almost precisely the same manner that his painting excites—with the sudden blow of a brilliant image. And for this reason photographs of Picasso's sculpture are frequently more arresting than the originals themselves: with Moore the reverse is almost always true. Moore's image is not that which we see from any *single* viewpoint. It is something we can only know, in a sense, non-visually; because it consists of the addition of what we see from one viewpoint to what we see from the next, or from fifty others successively. Thus in one's eye the image swells and changes, contracts and changes, as one steps round the sculpture standing there, before one, in space. A single form of Moore's, a single head-like knob, or an arm-like branch or stem of wood or stone —these may have a fairly obvious central thrust or direction: but, as one moves in relation to them, their extreme subtlety both of axis and of contour becomes at once apparent to a properly conscious eye. Take the two vertical "arms" (or "stems," or "spines"—the figure has two heads, so why not two spinal columns?) which connect the pelvis with the shoulders in the metal *Standing Figure* of 1950. Each of these limbs, so simple in form at first sight (a couple of bow-like verticals, very roughly, enclosing a space into which the imagination cannot help projecting the ghost of a human thorax), is in fact immensely subtle in its twisting, swelling, contracting, flesh-and-bone-suggesting contours. A couple of pages of close definition, with photographs and possibly diagrams of the section through these limbs at various points, would be indispensable if I were to describe clearly the purely formal reality of these parts of this fine work. Incidentally, this is one reason why I believe that what is sometimes called "formal criticism" is an art still in its infancy. We have barely begun to try to express *in words* those palpable plastic realities of which a sculpture or a painting actually consists. In an age dominated by various degrees of abstraction in the visual arts the need for formal criticism becomes an absolute necessity: as the subject recedes it is the form we are increasingly conscious of, and criticism must grapple with it and it alone, as often as not. I have often thought that many critics' seeming inability to do this, and their attachment to the subject-matter (so much more susceptible of verbal description), has led them to announce prematurely a wished-for "return to realism."

SUFFICE it to say here, however, that in my view Moore has no living rival in his power to create simple form. Picasso's sculpture frequently has rough expressionist surfaces which deflect attention from the fact that tri-dimensional exploration (not so much in terms of aerial space as in terms of the solid volumes used) is limited. And Brancusi's perfect single volumes contained within the tautest of envelopes, though they are utterly masterly, are in a sense too elementary as formal statements. Because Moore combines, in his genius, the opposite extremes of a major formal gift and sensibility with the surreal fantasy of a romantic poet, he has been able to take the perfect but single units of form discovered by Brancusi and to expand and extend and greatly complicate them without destroying that formal unity, in which sculptural strength resides. A vulgar illustration occurs to me: think of a child's balloon which, after three puffs, resembles a rounded lozenge; after six puffs five nubs appear; after ten puffs these have expanded into arms, legs, and head. Moore has succeeded in blowing up the balloon until—with its holes as well as limbs—it is if anything more complex as a mass than the human body itself: and this without bursting the envelope. To change the metaphor, the formal tautness and power of Brancusi's egg is retained in Moore's most complicated works—with their tunnels and bridges—because the tight envelope which separates the egg's mass from the surrounding air has been stretched but not broken.

But connected with this smooth envelope there is a possible defect which one should mention. As I have said, Moore's mastery of the definition of hard, precise, resistant yet organic form is to my mind supreme: that form's searched-out toughness and finality has come about through carving, not modelling; and carving has implied the smooth, infinitely subtle surface which I've referred to as "the envelope." The whole weave and thrust and twisting roll of his forms is conceived as hard, finite, smooth surface. No "expressive" raggedness is permitted. Yet there are moments when one feels that a

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passage in some surface or other suffers from a certain vacancy precisely because this smooth surface criterion has been applied too rigidly. And this in turn is possibly connected with another aspect of Moore's art that deserves more critical attention than it has yet received, I think. This is an occasional lack of "face." Moore's great achievement on the non-formal level (his achievement with *form* needs no further comment just here) is recognised widely: it lies in his identification of animate with inanimate realities, of the human figure with eroded rock-strata, of Man with primeval creatures whose facial features and limbs are less articulated, definite, or expressive of personality than our own. Everyone responds with an unquiet thrill to the typical streamlined, seal-like, almost featureless head of a Henry Moore reclining figure or torso. A hundred disturbing ideas interpose themselves: Is this seal-head an atom-blasted friend of ours? What schizophrenia emanates from the two blind, equal knob-heads of this metal *Standing Figure* of 1950? What universal dilemmas or fears are symbolised in these nevertheless immensely noble forms? Their power of communication in an extra-æsthetic sense is obviously tremendous and already well proved. Yet this lack of "face" is typical. His sculpture assails us with the grandeur and magnitude of vast impersonal forces; it possesses, so often, the blindness of the inanimate, or the generalised. Yet on those occasions when it superimposes upon all this a visage, a poignant, personal, particular, and immediately arresting *face*, I find the communication still sharper.

I believe that in the better among his recent bronzes he has achieved precisely this addition of tense, mysterious, and particular personality to the impersonal architectural structure of which he was already master. In that great bronze entitled *King and Queen*, all Moore's extraordinarily varied powers combined to produce an image of masculine and feminine individual consciousness as touching, intimate, and natural as anything in modern art. If we look at the two heads in *King and Queen*, and consider them as form, we find them strange, complex, and utterly original, unpredictable and abstract. But if, standing before them, we switch off this analytical vision, relax our formal scrutiny, and merely absorb what, on many levels, they have to give, we may become aware of the kindly and essentially normal presence which these two figures possess.

I set myself the problem of rebutting the charge that Moore is an overrated artist. He has his faults. And his real stature is probably impossible to gauge for the time being. But I hope I have said enough to forestall some of the criticisms which it is unavoidable, I think, that we shall hear, with increasing frequency, in the near future.

II. CON: *Basil Taylor*

SINCE 1948 Henry Moore's work has undergone significant changes. He has abandoned or modified those principles which had formerly made him a carver and which tied his sculpture to an ideal of truth to materials; his verbal admission of this can be found in his "Notes on Sculpture" of 1951 reprinted in *Henry Moore: Sculpture and Drawings since 1948*. Besides his conversion to modelling and to the possibilities of casting, the illustrations reveal a wide stylistic variety which cannot be found in the work of the thirties and forties, when certain themes and orthodoxies concentrated and limited his experiments. He has made carvings as abstract as any in his career—the screen for the Time-Life building for example; there has been a further sequence of reclining figures, some close to pre-war examples, others touched by that "humanism" and he has stated this to be the condition towards which "alive" painting and sculpture is now moving; he has overtly followed that course himself in his large *Draped Reclining Figure*, in the torso derived from it, and in the *Warrior*. He has fashioned small objects which might have been recovered from some archæological digging and offered a sort of Sutherlandish surrealism in his *Leaf Figures*. He has cast pieces from bones

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as in the *Goat's Head* and pursued the theme of the helmet in various directions. It was perhaps this variety of experiment which, among other reasons, encouraged Patrick Heron in the *New Statesman* to call him the Picasso of sculpture, but whereas the essence of that artist's work, which far outreaches Moore's in its diversity and inventiveness, is a magisterial virtuosity, a green-finger gift of promoting formal growth and vitality, Moore's art has, I believe, always been characterised by a formal ineloquence, a lack of structural command and energy, and for that reason I find his current reputation greatly exaggerates his powers. It is just in his failure to "knead mass and space"—to use a phrase of Dr. Pevsner's—that the trouble lies.

IN THE thirties, Moore was guided, indeed impelled, by certain ideas about the nature and conditions of sculpture, by a belief in carving as the only proper sculptural language and by a desire to preserve and foster the genius of stone or wood. This is a peculiarly English, in fact a puritanical prejudice shared by Barbara Hepworth among others; in a different connection it explains Roger Fry's aversion to Rococo and the general prejudice here against Expressionism, for the Rococo not only played with materials but challenged their identity, while the Expressionists refused to allow elegance, moderation, taste, to stay their hand. It would be difficult to decide whether Moore's convictions were the result of his particular ability as a craftsman, in the strict sense of that word, or whether his craftsmanship, his skill in tooling wood and stone, was stimulated by ideas. Either way, he has always produced suave and enjoyable surfaces, insisted upon manual skill, enjoyed and released the natural rhythms and stresses of the substances he has employed, but in consequence his forms have only too often been as inexpressive as a finely turned chair-leg. It is questionable in fact whether Moore has been vitally in sympathy with, or even affected by, the human figure as an eloquent organism, a vehicle of impulse and behaviour, the mansion of sentiments and emotions. He has regarded the human creature, not just dispassionately, but with coldness, and even the early life-drawings which were on view recently at the Leicester Galleries in London are exercises in a method of construction rather than investigations of the body's substance.

Regarding wood and stone not just as materials whose personality had to be respected, but as matter with a particular natural history—stone as a geological entity, a billet of wood as retaining the order and rhythms of a tree—he constructed an equation in which the elements were the material, its natural associations, and the figure. This is as much a metaphysical art as Nash's equation of a coiling convolvulus with the passage of the sun or a blasted tree with some animal monster. It is what Herbert Read has called "idea made image," but if the idea has found at least a plausible form, the form has seldom come to life. The most famous and widely appreciated works of the earlier period were the reclining figure in stone, the most complex expression of Moore's principles and interests. One critic, John Berger, has attacked Moore for retrogressively degrading the human creature; and being, one must imagine, a faithful Spencerian as well as a Marxist, Berger has applied the phrase "Piltdown sculpture" to denote the position of Moore's work in a pattern of artistic evolution. I do not find the theme retrogressive or insignificant, but although a profoundly relevant and suggestive one, it is better suited, I believe, to expression in poetry than in sculpture. Sculpture has such a strong material being and presence that it is an unsuitable vehicle for the impalpable or the metaphorical statement except when the idea can be presented through a body of palpable symbolism, when the idea presents itself to the artist in terms of some visible object. So I prefer, from this period, the simpler standing figures of women with or without children (Nos. 20, 21, 28a, 29b, 31b, 73b, and 75 in the earlier volume are excellent examples) and these indeed, as a group, are the most successful embodiment of Moore's talent. They are works of great beauty and originality, on the same scale of form and feeling as our medieval alabasters, serious, tender, precious things which will surely maintain their place among the excellencies of English art. Their originality lies in the development of the idea I have already indicated, a way of associating figure with material. They deny the substance and pulse of the body as absolutely as a Michelangelo

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or a Degas, a Rodin or a Matisse celebrate these qualities, but they do not subdue the flesh in the interests of mystery or magic, but at the command of a sculptural ideology. If this group of works represents the best of Moore, then the Northampton *Madonna and Child* is his most valuable single work, one in which human and divine mysteries had to be faced. I find the Madonna a more valuable expression of his wartime experience than the shelter drawings in which, as time passes, the technical mannerisms become more and more obtrusive. Its virtues are those of the earlier carvings, but particularly noticeable is the taste, sensitivity, modesty, and intelligence with which the task was conducted. The scale of the group is admirably adjusted to the siting, the relationships of the two heads, the gaze of the child towards the altar, the centre of His worship, and of the Virgin towards the human congregation whose eyes are held by hers as they move from West to East; this is a most beautiful and subtle invention. Elsewhere in the group, however, in the Madonna arms and feet, in the draped thighs and legs, there is a disappointing lack of eloquence, the forms are inert and sluggish. And this is not the unassertive eloquence of a withheld, withdrawn energy.

THE *Three Figures* in Battersea Park, the culmination of this phase of Moore's career in my opinion, marks his most considerable failure to date—the least suggestive of his larger works, formally the least inventive, somehow a parody of those sculptural orthodoxies which elsewhere had strengthened his art. Only this year Moore has stated, "The open air will show up the limitations of any sculpture that does not fully exist in three dimensions. A sculpture fails to be a presence under the diffused light of the sky if it is not fully conceived in the round." But this three-dimensional idea (the most important sculptural dogma of the 20th century) needs further definition if it is to be something more than a tautology. A post stuck into one's lawn has three dimensions and its presence must modify what was previously an empty space. And as Moore has suggested, "Space in sculpture should not become such a fetish that the form is weak and impoverished." But formal strength depends upon something more than a positive solidity. We are in danger today of regarding any object, natural or manufactured, as sculpture because it happens to be both three-dimensional and interesting. It is significant that Moore has been a collector of pebbles. Plant as well as animal forms, shells, crystals, have a structural energy which proceeds from the forces controlling their growth, but the stone or pebble has nothing but an elementary solidity determined by accidents of climate or collision; and its qualities lie upon the surface in its colour, pattern, and texture. It is also without that degree of vital articulation which is essential to the structure of all but the most primitive living matter. While sermons and other literary constructions may be found in stones, they do not provide, I think, a very good cue for sculpture; it is not sufficient for the sculptor to insist upon solidity when the distinction has yet to be made between inert, sluggish solidity, and the dynamic solidity which is the essence of living things and the finest sculpture. This pebble-like quality in Moore's work did not so much matter when his carved pieces were small and when the pebble was in fact a central point of reference, but in recent years when the course of his art has changed, this idea of form has become increasingly deficient. And is not his interest in pebbles, perhaps, the explanation of his talent?

The most important alteration revealed by this book is Moore's new interest in modelling. In the earlier work, wherein the human figure was turned to wood or stone, its structure became a wooden or stony structure. In the majority of his more ambitious works of the past five years—the *Warrior*, the *Draped Reclining Figure*, the *King and Queen*—it is the figure, however much transformed, which dominates; not to the same degree does the material explain and account for the form. Modelling involves the addition of one part to another; except in the least complex forms the material does not bind the parts together in the way that the mass of wood or stone necessarily does. In becoming more humanistic, in coming closer than ever before to the actual substance of the human figure, Moore invites us to compare the vitality of his forms with the vitality of the human form. If he still prefers to see his major sculptures sited in a landscape, it has not the significant influence upon his art which it had in the thirties. In constructing his work by

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means of the additive modelling process, he invites us to consider his powers of structural articulation—and they prove, I believe, to be seriously limited.

He has stated that his *Draped Reclining Figure* is intended to be "not in a slack repose but, as it were, alerted." He has written about "drapery emphasising the tension in a figure." Although the pose in this sculpture is itself suggestive of alertness, the forms are lacking in the very qualities he required, physical tension, pressure, bodily alertness. And because the body lacks energy, the desired interaction between figure and drapery does not occur; indeed the thinness and flaccidity of the cloth seems to have penetrated to the very centre of the figure. In the *King and Queen*, where the torso and thighs are flattened and slender, the surface is so little activated from within that only the lines scored on the face of the clay manage to give the bodies any kind of presence. And in sculpture "presence" ultimately depends upon a vital substance. It is not the relationship between the work and its natural origins which determines it, but simply the abstract activity of the forms. In a work like the *King and Queen*, whose imagery is mixed, not to say chaotic, the hands and feet, the arms, the torso, the heads each belonging to different conventions, material firmness and dynamism is peculiarly important. It is the *Warrior* above all which betrays these weaknesses most obviously and in which the failures in articulation are most disturbing—between right arm and shoulder, at both hips, at the base of the neck, at the right elbow. The sequence of form from the right shoulder to the lumpish shield is a succession of slack shapes loosely interconnected. The junction between neck and torso is only made at skin level, and the powerful bone of the knee is not felt back into the thigh or down into the leg. The passage of modelling across the back and between the two shoulders is unfortunately obscured in the illustration No. 83c by a large reflection of light, but in the work itself the strain and tension which is adumbrated by the figure's posture is not fulfilled in this region. As in the *King and Queen*, textures—and in this piece archæological textures such as we find in Marini—are called upon to perform the impossible, make a sculptural statement. Moore's allusions in all these pieces to Mediterranean figure sculpture only serves to emphasise this incoherence and slackness. And his own notes on Space and Form in Sculpture suggest that he is very much concerned with the dynamism of the figure, no longer with the transformation of flesh, muscle, bone into stone or wooden forms.

> FORM FROM THE INSIDE OUTWARDS
>
> *Tension and inner force of forms*
>
> Force, Power is made by forms pressing or straining from inside. Knees, elbows, forehead, knuckles, all seek to press outwards. Hardness, projection outwards, give tension force and vitality. Clenched fist, symbol of Power—of Force.

THIS volume offers a complete photographic record of Moore's work since 1948 and many of the photographs are brilliantly suggestive, but once again I have found the very qualities they imply to be absent in the sculptures themselves. When the profiles are reduced to the flatness of silhouettes, when powerful contrasts of light and shade give drama to the forms, when details bring Moore's beautiful textures close to the eye and separate them from their total context, when the camera leads us into the comforting, intriguing caverns of his open structures, when the camera angles create impressive foreshortenings the image is very compelling, but the camera can capture neither the presence nor the absence of a sculptor's most essential instrument—"power made by forms pressing or straining from inside." An important factor in the development of Moore's international reputation has been the photograph and the modern illustrated art book in all its efficiency and virtuosity. For when his sculpture is transferred into pictorial terms, its potency is remarkably increased.

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Letter from NEW DELHI

An Indo-Soviet Diary

NEW DELHI, November 18th. The postman arrived with my mail this morning on a bicycle adorned with two neat paper flags, crossed, of the tricolour and the hammer-and-sickle with a star. I had little doubt where the flags came from, but asked all the same. They were, of course, supplied by his office.

Last night I saw the circular park in Connaught Place, the capital's shopping centre, turned by the Public Works Department into a little forest of fairy lights. For weeks now an army of carpenters, masons, and gardeners have been busy erecting welcome arches and flagpoles along the principal streets, whitewashing housefronts, fertilising the grass lawns, levelling the sidewalks with red gravel, and putting fresh paint on lamp-posts. Not on any Republic anniversary, not even on the day the British transferred power in 1947, has New Delhi worn so gay a look with so many flags. Greetings in exotic Russian alternate with slogans in Hindi on the buntings in the city, and all along the road to Palam where the Soviet leaders are to land in the afternoon. An informal holiday has been declared in all offices, schools, and colleges. Forty thousand school children have been mobilised to line the twelve-mile route of the State drive from the airport to the President's House.

These are the embellishments Nehru has learnt from his trips to China and Russia since he first organised a mass welcome as a deliberate political act. That was in August 1953, when Mohammed Ali, then Prime Minister of Pakistan, hurried here for talks with Nehru on the sensational arrest and deposition of Premier Sheikh Abdullah in Kashmir. The strongest backer of Kashmir's union with India having turned hostile, Nehru was morally on the defensive. He was anxious to assure Mohammed Ali that Abdullah's arrest did not mean the end of the pledge to let the people of Kashmir decide their own future. Wishing to demonstrate India's sincerity and goodwill towards Pakistan, Nehru made an unprecedented public appeal for a fitting welcome to the visitor. The Delhi unit of the Congress Party chartered buses and trucks to carry thousands on a free ride to Palam, where Mohammed Ali received a bigger welcome than any given till then to a foreign statesman.

Few liked to admit at that time that the goodwill demonstration was the result of Nehru's appeal. In the present case the hurt reactions to Western press comments on the State-ordained welcome given to Nehru in Russia last June have strengthened the reluctance to admit official preparations—though such preparations cannot compare in effectiveness with like measures in a totalitarian country. Yesterday, when a columnist in the *Times of India* wrote, "Here, too, there will be spontaneous demonstrations carefully organised," a fellow journalist called it the slander of an American stooge.

Though the welcome for Bulganin and Khrushchev has been prepared on a much vaster scale than for Mohammed Ali, there is the big difference that today it is no self-conscious demonstration by politically embarrassed citizens. To the educated, the arrival of the Soviet leaders on the first goodwill visit ever paid by them to a non-Communist country looks like the most significant development of the post-Stalin era. Moscow has long since abandoned the attacks on Nehru as a tool of Western im-

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perialism. It now praises our independent foreign policy of peace and subscribes to the Panch Shila principles of non-interference and co-existence. The contract already made for the erection of a Soviet steel plant and the negotiations under way for technical aid in developing our coal and oil production seem to presage fruitful economic dealings in the coming years, when the accent in Indian planning will be on industrialisation. Why should we not be proud to welcome a friendly visit by the highest leaders of one of the world's two great powers?

As for the common people, the colourful preparations of welcome have been enough to attract them in thousands. As I took the road to Palam, the crowds on either side were exactly like those at any religious festival or fair. There was the same music, sideshows, and the brisk trade in groundnuts and sweetmeats. The only novelties were the ubiquitous flags and the uniformed children shepherded by schoolmistresses.

AFTERNOON. At the airport I stand sheltered on the tarmac with diplomats, ministers, and prominent Communist invitees, including Stalin peace-prize-winner Kitchlew. The iron railings threaten to give way under the weight of the surging crowd outside. Suddenly, finding Nehru behind me, perched on a stool to survey the gathering, I asked him: "Does this compare pretty well, sir, with the reception you got in Moscow?" He smiled with satisfaction: "This is only the beginning."

When the Soviet leaders finally arrived, the contrast between them was striking. Bulganin looked every inch the Prime Minister of a great country—dignified and impressive without being stiff, polite and friendly without being familiar. With his steady and penetrating blue eyes he seemed to size up each person to whom he was introduced. When he waved to the crowd it was the greeting of a dignitary, not a politician or salesman.

Khrushchev looked somewhat pathetic as he shadowed Bulganin to the saluting-base and passed the guard of honour. But once the formalities were over, it was Khrushchev who won the heart of the crowd by learning to pronounce "*namaste*" and greeting them with folded hands in the Indian fashion. He discarded no garlands, smiled and bowed profusely, and, when he shook hands, used both arms with the vigour of an intimate who has found a long-lost friend. If the people kept shouting more welcomes for Bulganin, it was only because the name was easier.

The next three days were rather dull, the visitors dividing their time between a tourist round of Moghul monuments and innocuous speeches pledging friendship, economic aid, and co-operation in the fight for peace. It was only in their long, prepared addresses to members of Parliament on the eve of their departure on a ten-day tour of the country that the Soviet leaders first exchanged amiability for the controversies of the cold war. Bulganin squarely blamed the West for the failure of the Geneva meeting of Foreign Ministers and for the stalemate on disarmament, while Khrushchev said: "We never compelled anybody and are not compelling any to accept our ideas of the reconstruction of society. One may wonder who is fabricating this lie about the Soviet Union." Shriman Narayan, general secretary of the Congress Party, commented: "We do not know how far this is true of the past. But we do believe that the U.S.S.R. has now given up the policy of exporting Communism to other countries."

NANGAL, November 22nd. An air-conditioned, luxuriously appointed special train brought the Soviet leaders overnight from Delhi to the site of Punjab's Bhakra dam, which will be the second highest in the world and is the pride of India's first five-year plan. Khrushchev notes with satisfaction that the dam will be bomb-proof (nobody could see how), asks the American chief engineer, Slocum, to "demolish the iron wall round your country," and hopes that Indian engineers will be able one day to do without foreign technical help.

I and my colleagues of the press party discover painfully in the afternoon that the Soviet leaders are on no sight-seeing tour. We had gone ahead to the power house at Ganguwal, downstream of the Bhakra dam site, which Bulganin and Khrushchev were due to visit. On returning puzzled to Nangal, we found that they had dropped the visit and made speeches instead at the State Governor's luncheon. Bulganin had confined

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himself to thanks for the welcome and praise for the industrious Punjabis. Khrushchev, in his first extempore address, offered to "share the last piece of bread with you."

At night we leave Nangal for Ambala airport to take our planes for the rest of the tour which is to be all by air. The Russians are using their own Ilyushins. The crew of the press party's Indian Dakota are glad that this is so, and tell us stories about the fantastic security measures on board the Indian aircraft which Chou En-lai used on his visit last year.

The pattern of speeches at Nangal was to be repeated wherever we went. Except at Madras, where he condemned Portuguese colonialism in Goa, Bulganin made no controversial speeches. He combined grateful expression of thanks for the welcome with lavish praise of the special qualities of his hosts. He lauded the martial valour of the Maharashtrians at Poona, the cultural heritage of South Indians at Bangalore and Madras, and the patriotism of the Bengalis at Calcutta. After these preliminaries Khrushchev would launch on his racy polemics larded with homely metaphor. Both of them readily responded to Indian ways of greeting. They cheerfully wore the welcome mark of the vermilion *tilak* on their foreheads, and donned Gandhi caps, Rajasthani turbans, and the South Indian *angavasthram* (gold-laced scarves) as they were offered.

Critical audiences and questions were strictly avoided. Not for them the Indian Council of World Affairs, an address before which has been a routine item in the programme of most other visiting statesmen. The only non-official banquet they accepted was by the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society at Bombay. They cancelled the scheduled reception by the Bombay Press Guild, the only occasion where there might have been questions and answers. Western correspondents pleaded in vain with Indian liaison officials for permission to interview the Soviet leaders.

The response from mass audiences made Khrushchev grow daily bolder in tone. At Bombay, our first major halt after Nangal, he traced Hitler's attack on Russia to the same forces which intervened and sought to suppress the first proletarian State. Greeting India's adoption of the socialist objective ("though our conception of socialism is a little bit different from yours"), he linked the defence of India's freedom and chosen way of life with that of Soviet Communism.

I was struck by the immense popularity of Khrushchev's polemics. Knowing that anti-colonialism is the deepest political urge of Indians, he made this his central theme. The identification of colonialism exclusively with the West was received without scepticism by people who have directly experienced Western rule but have heard little about the Soviet empire in far-away Eastern Europe. The political education of the average Indian on world affairs is derived almost entirely from Nehru, and he has never once spoken of any imperialism other than of the West. So with the theme of peace. Indians remember more vividly the dangerous crossing of the 38th Parallel by United Nations forces in Korea, against which Nehru repeatedly warned, than the start of the war in Korea when India quietly voted in favour of the U.N. resolution charging the Communist North with aggression. Nehru has tirelessly condemned NATO, SEATO, and other Western-sponsored military alliances as threats to peace, but has never explicitly deplored the actual disturbance of peace by the Communist camp in Korea or its menacing actions elsewhere. We have seen terrible pictures and read frightful accounts, in films and newspapers, of the test explosions of nuclear weapons conducted by the U.S., but never of similar explosions by Russia. When Khrushchev, at Bangalore, admitted the latest Soviet test with the hydrogen bomb and claimed for it the explosive power of several million tons of T.N.T., it evoked little of the fear caused by the visual publicity given to American explosions in the Pacific. On the contrary, I sensed among the audience something of the vicarious pride at non-Western power and achievement which was felt in India at the early military successes of Japan during the last war.

CALCUTTA, November 29th. The reception here has beaten the record of all other cities. As our vehicle inched its way through the three million people who have turned out to greet the Soviet leaders on their last halt before leaving for Burma, I remembered Nehru's words at Palam. This is certainly a fitting climax to the beginning of the welcome at Palam.

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But the best reception turned into the worst as, under the pressure of the milling crowds and with the clutch burnt out from repeated stopping and starting, the open Mercedes-Benz carrying Bulganin and Khrushchev broke down half way from Dum Dum airport to the Governor's House. Hustled into the nearest vehicle, they completed the journey in a closed police van, hidden from the view of hundreds of thousands who had waited for hours to see them. All the day's engagements were cancelled on account of the choked roads. Were the people to blame? They had been exhorted for over a week by their leaders, from the Chief Minister to the Communist Party, to give the visitors a welcome worthy of Calcutta. They did. But the streets were too narrow to hold them.

Nehru has joined the Soviet leaders here, and I wondered what he would say at tomorrow's public meeting after the un-neutral but popular speeches of Khrushchev. Did they embarrass him?

At the civic reception next evening I found from the advance notes of Nehru's speech that he intended, at this first opportunity, to reaffirm India's policy of non-alignment: "The great welcome that our guests have had in India has alarmed some of our friends in other countries who cannot help thinking in terms of rival camps and military alliances. I have often said that we do not propose to join any camp or alliance. That is our basic policy. But we wish to co-operate with all in the quest of peace and security and human betterment. . . . This (Indo-Soviet) friendship and co-operation is not aimed against any nation or people."

But Nehru had not intended to refer to Goa (despite Bulganin's declaration of support for India on this issue), and was forced to do so because Khrushchev brought up the question again—likening Portugal and other colonial powers to leeches which clung to the human body and sucked blood. After this Nehru could not but speak about Goa. He welcomed the Soviet leaders' support for Goan freedom, and asked why other countries remained silent. But he once again ruled out the use of force to make the Portuguese quit.

NEW DELHI, December 11th. Events have moved rapidly since I returned from Calcutta. As if in reply to Nehru's question why some countries have remained silent on Goa, the U.S. Secretary of State has issued a joint statement with the Portuguese Foreign Minister describing Goa as "a province of Portugal" in the Far East, stressing the "inter-dependence" of Africa and the Western world, and deploring the Soviet leaders' remarks on Goa as "an effort to foment hatred between East and West and to divide peoples who need to feel the sense of unity and fellowship for peace and mutual welfare."

The Indian reaction to this has been one of fury. The statement is seen as a blatant affirmation of American support for colonialism in Asia and Africa.

Meanwhile Bulganin and Khrushchev have returned from Burma and are in Kashmir. The day before yesterday Bulganin indirectly expressed Soviet acceptance of India's claim to this disputed territory by referring to Kashmir as the "northern part of India." Yesterday Khrushchev explicitly said at Srinagar, capital of the State, that "the question of Kashmir as one of the States of the Republic of India has been decided by the people of Kashmir themselves."

Russia has thus become the first major power to recognise Kashmir as a part of the Indian Union even in advance of the ascertainment through democratic process (to which Nehru is still committed) of the choice of the State's predominantly Moslem population between accession to India or Pakistan.

Khrushchev's support for the Indian claim to Kashmir is frankly on the ground that "the Republic of India is our ally in fighting for peace" while "the present Government of Pakistan frankly publicises that it is close to American monopolist circles." Even if Indians do not like the conversion of Kashmir into a cold-war issue, their gratitude for Soviet support can be easily imagined.

G. N. S. Raghavan

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Erich Heller: ERNST JÜNGER

THAT the time is out of joint is by now common European knowledge; the idea that the damage might be cured through cursed spite is a German variation on the Hamlet theme. From time to time some German romantics whistled this tune to frighten their fright away on their lone wanderings through the dark forest. In Nietzsche the theme gained depth and clarity. Spengler scored it for all civilisations the earth has known, and joined their voices in a *finale* that sounded jubilant although it meant death. Ernst Jünger discovered it for himself in the First World War; it spoke to him with a loud, large voice through the "storm of steel," as he called his war book. He brought the music home and became its intellectual pied piper, followed by many who would have followed Hitler, had Hitler been more literate and less vulgar; and often did follow him in spite of it.

What, then, is this Germanic *leit-motif* and perversity of the spirit? Theologically speaking, the doctrine that Beelzebub is the devil's only serious adversary: sin can only be redeemed by sin; morally, that wrong can be put right only by conquering the prejudice that it is wrong; and æsthetically, that if the habitual exposure to the loathsome horrors of the age has robbed us of the power of feeling and left us with nothing to admire, we must learn to admire this Nothing, discover the hidden beauty in that which is loathsome, and raise unfeeling itself to a dizzy pitch of ecstasy.

Yet Ernst Jünger is a serious writer, or at least a writer who, with some justification, has been taken very seriously by his numerous German readers over the last thirty years. His place in literature cannot be defined in the conventional terms of literary history. He has written no poems, no dramas, and—although some of his books tell a story—no novels. Nor is he simply a "man of letters." He is, or until recently was, one of the few genuine examples of what in the dim past of a decade ago some French intellectuals used to call *littérature engagée*. The early Ernst Jünger did not just write; he took up the pen. He did not describe, invent, or make poems; he sounded, diagnosed, and performed operations. He did not discuss, he committed himself, arranged for breakthroughs and decided issues. His main contribution to literature proper is a paradoxical literary experiment: to forge a style of writing which would authentically convey the fact that this is no time for style, writing, or literature. It may well be that, in attempting this, Ernst Jünger merely joined in a not uncommon pursuit of modern artists. We do have sculpture which expresses the conviction that there is nothing left to give form and shape to, except form and shape; paintings which suggest that all things have lost their outlines and colours, except outlines and colours; music and poetry whose theme is the impossibility of themes, the intractability of meaning in sounds and words.

HOWEVER, Jünger's is an experiment with a difference. He is not preoccupied with the possibilities of exhaustion of his medium, which is literature. It is not literature which is his professed concern, but the things he writes about. This seems simple enough.

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It is not. For what he writes about is something that is necessarily betrayed, distorted, and falsified in the very act of writing, and still more betrayed, distorted, and falsified in the act of writing well. For Jünger, the early Jünger, is a German romantic minus something. To the German romantic, life means above all ecstasy, death, and the making of literature. With Jünger we have to subtract the making of literature. What remains is ecstasy and death; ecstasy and death freed of all literary or poetic ingredients or temptations, simply the "existential moment" of ecstasy and death. This subtraction seems to be the *reductio ad absurdum* of literature and all its prerequisites: a desk and a chair in a quiet room, paper, peace of mind, and time —much time, all the time needed for finding an adjective and crossing it out again. For writing is, if not emotion recollected in tranquillity, at least recollection in tranquillity. The "existential moment," on the other hand, is by definition the moment which is impatient of either recollection or tranquillity. Tranquillity is conquest and transcendence of the moment; existential ecstasy is the moment's absolute consummation. There is, literally, nothing left to write about.

But this is by no means all there is to Jünger's difficult literary enterprise. Jünger is of course an individualist, if only in the sense that he wants to be left alone for recollection, tranquillity, and writing. As everyone knows, even those simple pains are more and more difficult to come by, and when they do come, more and more difficult to endure. There is always some very large menace knocking at the window, or an ever so slight disorder in the soul. Jünger's solution is to bid the menace come in and stay, and to accept the notice of dismissal that the age has served on the soul. Where others have protested in the name of the individual, he gives his consent—in a style individualistically distinguished by the trouble he took to make it impersonal. History, he seems to say, has robbed the individual of the power of significant speech, and has called upon the machine to deliver its message. If we cannot obey History completely and just be silent, the least we can do is to talk henceforward in a steely idiom. History has mobilised all human resources for enormous wars. Therefore, let the soul seek its illuminations in the engineered fires of catastrophe.

This, then, is the early Jünger: a German romantic in search of meaning through the intense affirmation of meaninglessness, trying to gather in a soul by throwing it to the winds and electrical storms, and groping towards ecstasy in the valley of unfeeling. In times like these, he maintains, life is only to be found in the catastrophic explosions of dead matter, and individual existence only in the voluptuous merging with that soulless collectivity decreed by History's own will. This man, who was undoubtedly one of Germany's bravest soldiers in the First World War, afterwards spent years in his study in order to work out the appropriate style for saying, implicitly, that spending years in a study is, in this hour of History, no life at all. But as such an absurd situation is difficult to maintain, the study itself was soon conscripted by History and, desk, paper, pen, and all, called up to do service in the great venture of war and total mobilisation. War, work, writing—everything goes into a new synthesis, forged together by the joint forge and forgery of world-spirit and metaphor. Enemy lines are written off and lines of words come under fire. Language digs itself in and guns begin to speak. While sentences are hammered out and intellectual convictions exploded, flames and splinters from bursting shells form themselves into lyrical patterns. The battlefield has epics to tell and the writer's writing is an act of sacrifice. In fact, again and again, Ernst Jünger uses the thoughtless metaphors of journalistic diction, not always successfully cleansed of their vulgarity, within a context of considered seriousness. J. P. Stern has devoted a large part of his recent study of Ernst Jünger's works to an illuminating examination of this aspect of the writer's language.

WHAT I have said so far is largely based on those of Jünger's works which were published before 1939. Among these, it was above all *The Storm of Steel* (1920), *Combat as Inner Experience* (1922), *The Adventurous Heart* (1929), and *The Worker* (1932) that have made Jünger famous in his own country, and assembled around his work a large section of that hybrid class of readers who, ever since the Bible became mere literature, go to bookshops and libraries in order to find something new to believe in. At least three of these books form

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a logical sequence. *The Storm of Steel* is the account of the First World War. The war's "inner meaning," the formative effect it had upon the person, is the subject of *Combat as Inner Experience*. This leads to Jünger's vision and practical prophecy of the man and society of the future, *The Worker*.

Much that Jünger wrote about the war is honest, sincere, and true. Indeed, it would be possible to say that sometimes he approaches the outskirts of great writing, were it not for the fact that time and again something upsets the very faculty of the reader to appreciate writing *as writing*. This something is the felt presence of the destructive paradox, the perverse intention of writing in such a manner that any manner of writing is shown to be false to the experience, and the elaborate stylistic scheme to convey with successful words the fact that all words must fail. But is this not, it may well be asked, the very paradox of the extreme reaches of all great literature? At the heights of ecstasy or tragedy in literature, does there not always come the moment when the word which is said has only just managed to become articulate; when the language is nothing but a minute inroad made in a last effort into silence? Yes, but this is the moment when the soul is overpowered by feeling and, with extreme economy of speech, says that it cannot say any more. Jünger, on the other hand, always says more. With all his cultivated abruptness, he is loquacious. He is not overpowered by feelings, but is merely at the mercy of acute sensations, and of insights which more often than not are spurious.

Yet I said he was honest. In so far as intellectual honesty is relevant to literature, it is of course not merely a question of the writer saying what he "really" thinks or believes. One can "really" think or believe the most fraudulent things, one can be sincerely bogus. The literary standard of sincerity is not so narrowly private. For every fact, thought, or belief expressed in literature is surrounded by the echo of many voices. Every new voice makes itself heard within a sphere of experience articulated by the past and vibrating with its memories. The measure of intellectual honesty lies in the writer's realisation that this sphere is not his private possession. He may contribute to its definition or redefinition, to its exploration or the pushing outward of its frontiers. Yet in substance it is inherited land. It is an area built up by the thought and feeling of a great society of minds and souls. No writer can be intellectually honest in any relevant sense if he lacks the knowledge, understanding, or intuition of the width and profundity of this common enterprise. This sense of a tradition of thought and feeling will support the individual writer, lure him further, or set his limits. Intellectual honesty is, above all, wise husbandry, the ability to deal honestly with inherited means; to know what resources of thought are required to meet the demand of certain questions, and what wealth of feeling to brave certain adventures; and then to leave these questions and adventures alone if one has nothing to add except one's poverty. But the early Ernst Jünger constantly overdraws his account. His enormous generalisations about modern man and modern society reflect at every point his failure to grasp the true worth of that tradition which he believed was doomed, and whose doom he made ready to accept. This is why his high seriousness is so often warped by a kind of metaphysical flippancy. His heart, however adventurous, is at times a mere onlooker, and the detached sobriety of his vision caused by a chill in the soul.

JÜNGER'S heroic nihilism has, however, a tradition of its own. Its name is Nietzsche. It was Nietzsche who conquered and marked out the area on which Jünger built, Nietzsche who quarried the stone which Jünger used. Yet the building turns out to be flatter than the design. It lacks the very dimension which constitutes Nietzsche's depth: morality, or, to call it differently, love. Nietzsche saw in the collapse of religion, in the death of God, and in the approach of nihilism the greatest spiritual and moral challenge to man; for Jünger it is, in the widest sense, a political problem, a problem of intellectual and psychological strategy. Nietzsche's Superman is a creature who has struggled his way beyond good and evil. For Jünger's Worker the moral problem is not as much out-struggled as out-moded. The world-spirit, not the soul of man, has left it behind. This is the most insidious brand of Germanic concoctions: surface-Nietzsche plus surface-Hegel, an intoxicant which, while it lasts, has the power of making cerebral acrobatics look like adventures of the heart, and an assortment of

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trivialities from the refrigerator like a glacial landscape of the mind. If the Superman, as one of Nietzsche's posthumous notes suggests, was to be "Cæsar, with the heart of Christ," then the collective of Jünger's Workers is made up of little Cæsars with little hearts of steel.

But let us not underrate the importance of Jünger. His work issues from an experience and a situation in which we are all involved, and perhaps the more involved the less we are prepared to acknowledge it. The least violent way of describing this potentially violent situation is perhaps to say that the accustomed methods of making sense of our world no longer fit our actual experience. This could be shown to be the case almost everywhere where intellectual endeavour assumes its more definite forms: in the arts, in literature, in philosophy, in physics, and even in the kind of humour in which we find relief and relaxation. On every level of seriousness or fun, the suspicion rules supreme that this is an absurd world. It expresses itself now tragically and now with laughter and now again with mathematical exactitude. Some people call it, rather simple-mindedly, the menace of irrationalism. It may be wiser to see in it the somersault of rationalism and humanism. The noble decision, made at the beginning of the history of the modern mind, to reach an ever higher degree of certainty through doubt has led to unforeseen dangers: the refinery of truth is cluttered up with slag. The dark regions, that seemed hopefully reduced by making man the measure of all things, have become immeasurably darker. In the end, absurdity may be the only certainty of the ever-doubting mind.

The early Ernst Jünger's intellectual strategy was based on the full acceptance of this situation. Thus he became the spokesman of a generation in Germany who felt that the experience of the First World War gave the lie to all beliefs and ideals in which they had been brought up. "That which is unknown, extraordinary, and dangerous has become the lasting norm. . . . Catastrophe emerges as the *a priori* of a changed mode of thinking." This is Ernst Jünger's diagnosis. And his therapy is to educate a race of men who "live in danger as in their proper element," who "gain security not through the diminution of danger but through the increase of their strength," and who "triumphantly exist, salamander-like, in the fire, asking for no alleviation of their fate." For this war has come to young men truly "sick to death" of a peace that so obviously was not "the real thing," made up as it was of doubtful certainties, uncertain doubts, and boring indecision. "We longed for something present and real," wrote Ernst Jünger, "and would have invaded the ice, the fire, and the ether merely to rid ourselves of boredom." Only he will understand this, he added, who "has reached the point at which nothingness itself appears more desirable than anything that is assailable by doubt." And doubt can do no harm to the one certainty: to have existed, be it only for a moment of dizzy awareness, "at the deepest well-spring of the age." And what is this well-spring of the age? High treason to counter high treason. Mind, with its cultivation of doubt and anti-vitalistic rationality, has betrayed life, and now mind must propitiate life by betraying itself. "It is one of the cruel delights of the age to be an accomplice to this blasting operation." Clearly, to be a salamander and able to live in the fire, is one thing: another, to mobilise the salamanders to defeat the fire-brigade. Jünger's salamanders were guilty of preparing arson.

But when in 1939 Hitler, outside the fence of metaphor, lit the fire, Jünger published his *On the Marble Cliffs*. It was suppressed by Hitler's censors. This book shows remarkable courage, a courage worthy of the soldier of the First World War who had been decorated with the *Pour le mérit*. It describes a community of peaceful book-readers, ex-combatants turned disputants, and lovers of the traditional noble virtues, threatened with extinction by a "totally mobilised" underworld under the direction of a madly sadistic and power-drunk Chief Forester. There could be no doubt about the meaning of the allegory, and certainly the German censorship had none.

From then onwards Ernst Jünger has been working on an intellectual and literary project, still vaster and perhaps still more hopeless than his earlier one: to reconcile his old insights into the nature of the modern world with that tentative belief in the eternal verities that had been awakened in him by the rule of the Chief Forester. His voluminous diary of the Second World War, *Strah-*

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lungen (1949), bears witness to the inception and first fumbling execution of this hazardous enterprise; fumbling, although the book, abounding with memorable descriptions and striking aphorisms, hardly ever betrays any lack of self-assurance. In fact, the peculiar unbalance of Jünger's mental make-up seems unshaken.

His mind has been formed not only in the clash between romantic expectation and the experience of mechanised war and peace; three other forces, at work in our more recent intellectual tradition, have had their say too: realism, symbolism, and Hegelian historicism. Jünger has the realist's appetite for detail, the symbolist's virtuosity in extracting æsthetic significance from it, and the historicist's passion for big historical generalisations. But he is also an "existentialist" who seeks "commitment." And when all is said and done, he seems committed, at bottom, to something that allows for no commitment: to a historical abstraction. This is why his world is still without *moral* meaning. His intellectual generalisations bypass the concrete moral encounter. Hence they are spurious. Again and again he comes close to being a pedantic dandy of the Apocalypse.

Therefore he rightly claims that he has not been converted. It is not from a humbled heart that he has abandoned his former heroic nihilism. Indeed, his very descent into those depths where he now divines the springs of nature, language, tradition, peace, and religion, is performed with an air of condescension. When he believed the time was ripe for the exclusive rule of the Soldier and the Worker, he greeted their arrival with that great German gesture of intellectual welcome of which one can never be quite sure whether it means joy, malice, heroic prophecy, or simply bowing to historical necessity. And Ernst Jünger does not think now that he was wrong then; he merely adds a newcomer to his little party of authentic ambassadors of the world-spirit: the *Waldgänger*, the solitary explorer in the woods, who shuns the Soldier's camp and the Worker's collective, trying to recapture more ancient meanings beyond the din of the modern city. If Ernst Jünger now feels inclined to dedicate himself to the virtues of the contemplative life, he must justify it by the fact that History has once more made available a little sanctuary where the hour is no longer sounded by mechanical bells and buzzers linked to the mechanical rotation of mechanical hands, but gently flows like sand through the hour-glass. Yes, it is *Der Waldgang* that matters now in 1951 and *Das Sanduhrbuch*, the book of the sand-glass, that makes sense in 1954. What has happened? Has Jünger withdrawn from the storms of steel into the tower of ivory? Perhaps, but not without charging the cost of the move to the account of History. He wrote *Ueber die Linie* in 1950, a treatise with which he turned over a new leaf in the book of historical fever-charts, announcing the world-spirit's decision to manœuvre us successfully over the zero-point of nihilism. By the dispensation of History, Eros may love once more, the Muses may smile again, and even cathedrals may cautiously lift their spires above the horizon.

IF THIS is not just to Jünger the man, it is an injustice which Jünger the writer does to himself. His very language makes our case. Speaking now of peace, tradition, the glory of the word, and the future of churches, his diction has hardly changed from those remote days that, "aglow and many-coloured, ran through the soldiers' hands like the beads of a red-hot rosary by which they had to count their prayers in order to realise themselves." This language, recently often a little tired and dishevelled, has always carried an echo of that sounding brass and tinkling cymbal that would be heard even from the tongues of angels if there were a want of charity.

Conversion? No, History. But History means, among other things, the free convertibility of intellectual currencies. Ernst Jünger has remained a member of that Germanic midnight community which is haunted by the irreconcilable ghosts of Hegel and Nietzsche, the one luring the soul with the promise of authentic existence and unlimited freedom, the other tying the mind to the concept of historical inescapability. If History were a god with a claim to man's soul, instead of being a doubtful science with the power to corrupt man's consciousness, the outcome might be high tragedy; as it is, even the most serious intentions exert themselves in vain amid the uproar of a catastrophic farce.

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Comment

U and Non-U

From the Duchess of Devonshire:
As the co-founder, with my sister Jessica, of the Hons Club I would like to point out that it was no more necessary to be born an honourable to be a member of that club than it is necessary to be white to be a member of White's or to be French to live in France.

The word Hon meant Hen in Honnish, and therefore to say that someone was a Hon meant that they were a Hen, implying worthiness to be a member of our Club.

We were very fond of chickens and on the whole preferred their company to that of human beings, so to be likened to a hen was the highest compliment we could pay.

For the sake of accuracy I would like Mr. Evelyn Waugh to know that my sister Nancy, far from being Queen of the Hons, was the dreaded leader of the rival organisation, the Horrible Counter-Hons.

DEBORAH DEVONSHIRE

London, W.1

PROFESSOR Ross, on p. 20 of his article "U and non-U" in your November issue, says: "In German there may well have been something comparable" (to the linguistic class-distinctions he has observed in English). Not only has there been, but there is. I cannot help feeling, however, that his example "Küss die Hand" (on introduction to a female) is ill-chosen. The expression has, I feel, always been frowned upon in true German circles, because it is a characteristically Austrian form. Since the Germans, especially in the North, and even more so in Prussian circles, have always tended to regard the Austrians as an amusing but slightly irritating race who should never be allowed off the operetta stage, they were certain to frown on "Küss die Hand" for no other reason than that it was Austrian, irrespective of whether it was U or not. "Küss die Hand" may still be heard in Vienna, and (under the influence of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy?) is still used in Jugoslavia (at least in U circles in Zagreb) in the Croatian form "Ljubim ruku."

FRANK SHAW

Münster, Germany

(*This correspondence is now closed.—Ed.*)

Fei Hsiao-tung

MR. WITTFOGEL (ENCOUNTER, August 1955) says I have not contested his statement that, prior to 1949, Fei Hsiao-tung's "views differed fundamentally" from those of the Chinese Communists and that he is now supporting, or pretending to support, policies "that formerly were alien to his way of thinking." On the contrary, my letter definitely indicated that, even before the war, Fei was sympathetically interested in the policies of the Chinese Communist Party and enthusiastic about its success. For the rest, Dr. Fei Hsiao-tung's letter (which I have sent you on his behalf) only leaves me with the need to insist that politically urged speculations, especially in a book review, about "the innermost thoughts" of men far removed by geography, culture, and ideology are never entitled to respect.

The difference in tone between Robert Redfield's letter and that of Mr. Wittfogel illustrates the difference between the approaches and personal qualities of a distinguished scientist and a critic who is merely anti; and I am happy that Dr. Fei Hsiao-tung's letter also gives the feeling that some day Dr. Redfield and himself may collaborate again, and with closer understanding, in the service of Chinese and human welfare. Meanwhile, we can all benefit from the unfortunate situation between them if we realise that it is another "cold war" casualty in good personal relations—and our perspectives on Mr. Wittfogel and his spiritual kinsfolk should widen accordingly.

CEDRIC DOVER

London, W.6

The following is the text of Dr. Fei's letter, which Mr. Dover has sent to us:

Sir,

ENCOUNTER recently published Wittfogel's review of *China's Gentry*, then Cedric Dover's castigation of the review, William Empson's views, Wittfogel's reply, and Robert Redfield's statement (January and August numbers). I have read them all.

Perhaps now I can say something about this matter.

This is a typical example of how certain

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groups, trading on a situation in which there are no normal relations between the Chinese and American peoples, try to spread rumours, sow dissension, and engineer misunderstanding and mistrust for their own ends. The long and the short of the matter is this:

Before liberation (1947–8), in areas under Kuomintang control, I published a series of essays on China's social problems. In 1948, Dr. Robert Redfield of Chicago University came to give lectures in China. His wife, who came with him, translated those essays into English with my help. They left Peking shortly before the city was liberated and took with them part of the translated manuscript. After the liberation, the U.S. government cut itself off from New China, normal relations between the peoples of the two countries were severed, and I lost touch with Dr. and Mrs. Redfield. Mrs. Redfield finished the translation in the United States where, in 1953, the book was first published under the title *China's Gentry*. I did not read the translation before the manuscript went to press; I was not notified of publication; and I did not receive the usual complimentary copies after publication. I first saw the book in a list of new publications, but so far I have not seen the book itself.

In translating and publishing this book Dr. and Mrs. Redfield kept their word to a friend. Therefore, in ordinary circumstances, I should have no cause for complaint. But inside these years—a good five years—vast changes have taken place. First and foremost, there was the victory of the people's revolution in China. Since I took part in this revolutionary movement, the change in my views has been considerable; and the translator must surely know that people's ideas change with the passage of time, especially when radical social changes have also taken place. So, to have asked my consent before publication would have been a mark of friendship as well as a token of a sense of responsibility.

The fact is that many of the opinions I expressed in pre-liberation days I have now discarded as untenable. Consequently, if Dr. and Mrs. Redfield had asked me in 1953 if I wanted this book published, I should certainly have said "no"; for it is absurd for a writer to purvey ideas to his readers that he himself has disavowed. Of course, I am not denying that in pre-liberation days I did hold the ideas and views expressed in the book, and as an historical document it perhaps has some justification. Nevertheless, I should like to be in a position to take the opportunity presented by its publication to tell my readers my present attitude to my former ideas and views, and to try to show how I gradually changed them; but I cannot do this until I see a copy. I hope I can read it as soon as possible. Not only do I have the right to evaluate it, but I believe that I owe it to my readers to do so. Moreover, the serious and responsible discussion that may follow would benefit all. Such free discussions should help to increase understanding.

I feel that the reason why Dr. and Mrs. Redfield did not get in touch with me before the book was published was not that they did not like to do so or that they forgot it, but merely because normal relations between the peoples of the two countries had been broken off, since the U.S. government refused to recognise our New China and tried to humiliate and undermine it. Those in power knew well enough that if the American people had known the real situation in China, their sympathies would have gone out to us, they would have rejoiced that China was starting a happy life, and they would never have sanctioned intrigues and attempts to restore the privileges of the few. That was why the American government broke with traditional friendships, terminated all connections between us, and spread rumours and accusations calculated to arouse suspicion and mistrust against New China. That is what is known as "cold war."

I have no doubt about Dr. and Mrs. Redfield's personal friendship. In the face of the hostility of the U.S. government, they were, for all their willingness, unable to keep in touch with me. They found themselves, as it were, fulfilling the will of a deceased friend, and assiduously preparing a posthumous book for publication. I learnt from the *American Anthropologist* that Mrs. Redfield had spared no effort on her translation, and in certain book reviews I read that they stated in the book that they had lost touch with me after leaving China. Thus, they have made clear their responsibility for publishing this book. But they forgot to consider what an exacerbating influence the publication of *China's Gentry* would have on relations between the Chinese and American people in the present situation, for those who do not want to see the traditional friendship between the people of the two countries maintained and strengthened will take advantage of its publication to make up further rumours and calumnies, as Wittfogel's "review," and your willingness to publish it, shows. But they forgot this one point, and are made use of by others to harm the friendship between our two peoples. That was clearly not their intention.

Dr. and Mrs. Redfield and their friends have also forgotten that those they knew in China have grown with their nationhood. For myself, I should like to tell them this in all sincerity: in pre-liberation days, I did hold the view that academic study was one thing and practical

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political activity another, and that they had nothing to do with each other. That view is out of touch with reality and therefore incorrect and untrue.

Wittfogel's "review" is strange and arrogant. Anyone who has read it can smell gunpowder. It is actually not a book review at all, but a denigration of the writer, a venomed shaft, aimed at the Chinese and American peoples who are bound together by traditional friendship. Making capital out of the fact that he knew me personally, he stops at nothing in fabricating rumours and groundless speculations, describing me as a miserable figure without moral fibre under cruel persecution. Having made this man of straw, he exhibited it to my friends and my English and American readers, saying that this was typical of the intellectuals in New China. In this way, he made many people regard New China as something repulsive, and supported the warmongers' intention to do as they please with human lives.

Wittfogel's tactics are pretty despicable. He tries to put me in the awkward position of finding it hard to plead for myself. If I write something to refute him, he can say I have no freedom of speech, no moral fibre. What is worse is that he goes beyond concocting rumours and allegations to pretending that he is in a better position to know my innermost feelings than I am myself. In these ways he pats himself on the back and tries to throw dust in the eyes of the public.

Later, he poured out a string of sordid and baseless allegations against New China in his reply to Mr. Dover and Mr. Empson. He poses as an authority. He says he knows that the peasants of China are dissatisfied with the present order. He deliberately attempts to give English and American readers wrong impressions about New China.

But real justice will never perish from the earth. Mr. Dover, a friend of mine who visited China and had personal talks with me, was indignant at the so-called book review. I must thank him for sending it to me and for his forthright reply to Wittfogel. Mr. Empson pointed out that Wittfogel's "casual assertion" "is a particularly bad guess, as well as being rather nasty." Dr. Redfield expressed the view that he did not think Wittfogel's representations could be read as an authoritative statement of my present situation.

If I may say a few words more, I would say this: I think we should all learn a lesson from this matter. There are some people whose interest it is to create misunderstanding and mistrust among the peoples of different nations. They stop at nothing to set people by the ears. They dislike us peace-loving peoples living decently and entering into normal relations with the peoples of other lands. They trick themselves out in all sorts of disguises, sometimes presenting themselves as scholars, and sometimes even speaking in the fine name of friendship. We must keep our eye on such people, expose their intrigues, and not let them shelter among our friends—and it is encouraging for us to know that there are so many to whom such vigilance is a matter of principle.

Yours truly,

FEI HSIAO-TUNG

Central Institute for Nationalities
Peking. 26 October, 1955

[*Mrs. Robert Redfield has forwarded us the text of the following letter, which she has sent to Dr. Fei Hsiao-tung, care of Mr. Cedric Dover:*

Dear Hsiao-tung,

It was good to hear from you, if only indirectly. Otherwise we have had only reports of you, from Chinese friends here, from a friend of ours in Norway who went to China, and now recently from Cedric Dover. Of course we want you to see *China's Gentry*. You may be sure that during its preparation here we longed to be able to discuss it with you. If you had sent us word, as you well might have, through Hong Kong, perhaps by mutual friends in England, that you did not wish it to come out, it would have saved us work and the publishers some money. There was indeed a question whether so fragmentary a work—for we found it impossible to get your other essays properly translated as you remember we had hoped—should be published at all. We did go ahead with it not only to fulfil our promise to you to do so, but also because, with the great gulf which had developed between our two countries, it seemed at least to offer something which would help mutual understanding. When we were with you this improvement in understanding between our two countries was something you strongly believed in. So, in bringing about the publication of the book, we felt we were not only carrying out our promise to you but also giving realisation to this general purpose which you and we shared. I may say that I personally felt I learned much in working on these materials; I had to educate myself a good deal in the process.

You may well think that I have not educated myself enough. There is also the point you make in your letter that the book no longer represents your views. But we tried to present the material, not as representing the new revolutionary China, but as the views and sentiments of an intelligent and disinterested Chinese social scientist at the point of transition between

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traditional and new China. I am glad to see that in your letter to ENCOUNTER you say that at that time the views in the book were indeed yours. So, even if you have changed, the essays will have validity "historically," as you suggest. Some day, even you yourself, or those who come after you, may be securely established enough to wish, not to revert to, but to try to understand sympathetically the ancient and honourable traditions which these writings to some degree still preserve. From the point of view of the West, and especially of Americans, it seems worth while to emphasise that ideas never were on a dead level in China, that there as well as here there are individuals with distinct points of view, and, most of all, that all over the world there are men of good will who are striving not for self-aggrandisement nor even for national aggrandisement, but for ideals we may all share. If I have read too much into your writings you will perhaps forgive it. Both Robert and I feel that it would be very useful if you could now tell us and other interested readers just how your views have changed in the years since last we saw you. Perhaps ENCOUNTER would be willing to publish such a statement. In any case we should appreciate it.

With best wishes for your good health and that of your family in the coming year.

Sincerely,

/signed/

MRS. ROBERT REDFIELD]

[*Professor Wittfogel replies:*

Dr. Fei is an official of a government which, possessing total power, exerts total control over the utterances of its subjects. Free discussion with him is therefore not feasible. But since he used the platform of ENCOUNTER to combine a statement of his political opinions with an attack on ideas expressed in my review and letter, I should like to answer him briefly.

Pleading for a restoration of "normal relations" between the Chinese and American people, Fei speaks of the Chinese people without mentioning the régime that regulates their behaviour. However, experience with Communist governments shows unmistakably that, even when diplomatic relations have been "normalised," the subjects of a Communist-dominated state have no opportunity to maintain independent relations with citizens of the non-Communist world. The establishment of such relations is eminently desirable. But Fei's idea that this can be accomplished by diplomatic recognition and changes in methods of publishing and reviewing is, to speak politely, Utopian.

In China the great majority of all people are peasants. For this reason, and because of his previous record, I stressed Fei's relationship to the peasants. And I also suggested that, because of this record, the Communist régime ended his investigations of Chinese villages and assigned him to non-Chinese groups. I regret that Dr. Fei failed to comment on this point, which is indirectly confirmed by the fact that he is now working in the Central Institute of Nationalities, an organisation that deals essentially with tribal minorities.

I regret even more that Dr. Fei, who is so articulate about his personal affairs, is so hazy about the fate of the Chinese peasantry. The agitated way in which the newspapers of Communist China discuss the crisis in the Chinese villages clearly reflects the despair of the peasants who, after a partial redistribution of the land, today have already lost, or expect to lose, all their land through a state-imposed collectivisation.

Dr. Fei wants the members of the non-Communist world to be vigilant regarding the issues raised in the present controversy. I disagree with his interpretation and objectives; but I certainly agree that vigilance is of the essence. And I earnestly hope that an ever-increasing number of thoughtful persons will recognise the gigantic tragedy that, at this very moment, is overtaking the Chinese villages.]

ERRATUM: There were, unfortunately, two misprints in Burns Singer's poems in our December number. Line 14 of *18IIIXSG* should read

Though safe to watch me going down we stand

and the second sentence of *Letter from Lerwick* begins

These sinking islands still . . .

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Troubled Dialogue

IT WILL not detract from the value of other contributions on the subject if one concedes that Mr. Dwight Macdonald's article in the December issue is the most readable account of the Milan Conference on The Future of Freedom that has yet appeared. It is natural that this should be so in view of the rôle that Mr. Macdonald has chosen for himself of a drama critic reporting on a play. It also follows from this, however, that, written from his ringside seat, Mr. Macdonald's article should be more about the acting and not so much about the play. On the other hand, Professor Shils's excellent articles in the November issue of ENCOUNTER and the December issue of the Indian review, *Quest*, provide perhaps a better analysis of the processes of thought to which expression was given at the Conference.

Mr. Macdonald's criticism about the inadequacies and shortcomings of the Conference are in general not unfair. The Conference was undoubtedly too big to function effectively as a seminar and therefore partook almost inevitably of the character of a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, simultaneous translations and earphones doing their bit to contribute to the atmosphere. Perhaps from this stemmed the fact that some leading participants were unable to divest themselves altogether of their rôle as national statesmen speaking for their respective countries, while the whole essence of the Conference surely was that individual lovers of freedom had come together to exchange ideas as individuals in no way responsible for the respective policies of their governments.

On the other hand, if the Conference had broken up into smaller round-tables in the manner suggested by Mr. Macdonald and others, the experience of each delegate would have been limited to hearing and knowing only a third or a fourth of the participants; while this way—unsatisfactory as was the five-minute rule and the rambling nature of the debate—at least one had a glimpse into the minds of all the interesting personalities who attended the Conference.

When all is said and done, the fact remains that the Conference was an intellectual treat. It permitted the renewal of old contacts and the making of new friendships. At least to those of us who came from the periphery of the free world, the discussions on Freedom and Planning, the economic development of the U.S.S.R. as compared with the Democracies, the rôle of the intellectual, and the genuineness of the Soviet "Thaw," were most stimulating. It is perhaps a pity that the Conference met before the second Geneva Conference. Otherwise, we might have had the kind of concrete situation that contributed to the success of the first Congress in Berlin in 1950.

Both Mr. Macdonald and Professor Shils have made useful contributions in analysing the respective rôles of the participants who came from the West and the East. In view of the vital importance of what have been described, for lack of a better title, as the "under-developed" countries, an understanding of the gulf in the thinking that was revealed is of considerable importance.

In the West, freedom is assured, security has been achieved, and thus the approach, as Mr. Macdonald points out, was a somewhat academic and abstract one. In Asia and Africa, however, either national independence and political democracy have not been won or these freedoms have just been secured and by many barely experienced. Also, the actual or potential freedom is in imminent danger of being lost through the advance of Russo-Chinese colonialism. Hence the greater intensity of feeling expressed by those from Asia and Africa. Hence perhaps also the Western inability to understand why intellectuals in these regions should feel such a need for a cause with which to identify themselves. I am not insensible of the fact that freedom of choice between different causes is the essence of democracy, and that no one panacea can or should be juxtaposed against the Soviet myth. But surely there can be a sense of fellowship even in defence of freedom? I am glad to find that Mr. Nicolas Nabokov, the Secretary-General of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, in a speech made in Delhi on November 9th on his way to the Far East, described the aim of the Congress as being that of fostering "discussion in which free men will clarify and rediscover their true beliefs and in the

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course of which the brotherhood of freely thinking men would emerge as a precious by-product."

If the Editors will permit this reader's eye to stray to another page in this issue of ENCOUNTER, may I say how disturbing it is to learn from "Notes from a Diary" by Stephen Spender of the sad conclusion, to which Mr. George Kennan has evidently been driven, of the need for a divorce between East and West? Considering that almost every Asian present at the Milan Conference was an anti-Communist, a believer in freedom, and therefore predisposed towards friendship towards the West, Mr. Kennan's views, as reported by Spender, are somewhat frightening in their defeatism. No one who has seen my article on "The Mind of Asia" in the July issue of *Foreign Affairs* will accuse me of being insensible of the exasperation that must be caused to clear-sighted people like Mr. Kennan by certain aspects of neutralist thought in this part of the world, but surely this calls for an effort to build bigger and better bridges by which to link Eastern and Western thinking and not for throwing up one's hands in despair and permitting yet one more Curtain to be erected.

In that context, perhaps it is a pity that neither Mr. Macdonald nor Professor Shils mentioned the Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of the Congress in Milan on the day after the Conference concluded. All three of these Resolutions were concerned with developments in the under-developed regions—the first protesting against the suppression of a liberal newspaper in a country of Latin America; the second giving expression to solidarity with Hu Feng and other Chinese writers who have fallen victims to Communist suppression; and the third giving concrete embodiment to the recognition of the importance of the underdeveloped regions by all speakers at the Milan Conference. Since this last Resolution is of some little significance as giving shape to what may be called our own Point Four Programme, I would like to be permitted to cite it:

> "Taking note of the strength of sentiment at the Conference on the Future of Freedom in regard to the vital importance to the strength and unity of the peoples of the underdeveloped regions, this General Assembly of the Congress for Cultural Freedom recommends to the Executive Committee the desirability of considering ways and means, through the organisation of the Congress and otherwise, of giving concrete expression to the solidarity of the intellectuals of the free world with the writers and artists of the underdeveloped regions, such as research in common problems, assistance in translation and publication of books, exhibitions of paintings and other artistic activities."

MINOO R. MASANI

Bombay

IN HIS account of the Milan Conference on the "Future of Freedom" published in the November issue of ENCOUNTER under the title "The End of Ideology?", Edward Shils writes that I there "denied the obligation of the richer countries to provide aid to the poorer countries." Other members of the Conference seem to have taken the view that I had said that such help should not be given at all. This, as I explained in a later session, was obviously untrue; but even Mr. Shils, who comes nearer the point, does not convey accurately what I wished to say, and still think worth saying. I therefore should like to take this opportunity of unambiguously stating my position.

One thing at least must be clear to anyone who troubled to consider the implications of the Milan discussions—though it is by no means necessary to have been at Milan in order to grasp it—and that is, that whatever may be true about the "bipolarity" of the contemporary world from the military or military/political viewpoint, it patently does not exist in the sphere of the mind, or in that of popular emotions. For NorthAtlantica the threat to freedom is almost wholly today the threat from the Soviet world; the fate they fear is the fate of Russia's satellites, or at a more sophisticated level (or if you prefer more ingenuous level) that of being forced by the very struggle against it to compete with the Soviet Union into practices which would assimilate their own conditions too closely to their assailants'. With some exceptions this whole preoccupation is alien to the rest of the non-Soviet world; and even where it was obviously felt very strongly at Milan, as by Mr. M. Masani, its expression could not find any very straightforward form because of the necessity of reconciling it with the general ideology of the "underdeveloped" countries. Outside NorthAtlantica, based as it is upon non-intervention by the West in their affairs, Mr. Shils's question, "The End of Ideology?", could only receive an unqualified negative.

In as far as "freedom" is an evocative word outside NorthAtlantica, it is so not in the individualist or pluralist sense attached to it in NorthAtlantica, but in terms of this new ideology of the "underdeveloped" countries; and that it is a new ideology is most easily demonstrated by the fact that it is shared by people in countries whose situation in regard to

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the Soviet world on the one hand, and the West on the other, differs very considerably from case to case. Countries like India or the Arab States, which have only relatively recently emerged from foreign rule or control, talk in the same accents as West Africans whose countries have not yet reached independent status, or as countries which, like the Latin American States, have been independent nations as long as Belgium. The meaning attached to freedom within this ideology clearly refers to freedom of the nation rather than to the status of individuals or groups within it. But the fact that the ideology survives not only the grant of political independence but even, as the example of India shows, the assumption of acknowledged Great Power status, shows that its claims are much wider. What those who share this ideology believe is that the peoples to which they belong have an unqualified claim, not only to political sovereignty as this was defined in Europe in the heyday of the nation-state, but also to other concessions on the part of the Western Powers without which they cannot enjoy their "freedom."

THE heart of the matter is the economic aspect of the ideology, which is based on the view that the West, being richer than the poorer countries outside NorthAtlantica, owes them aid of a kind which will enable them to close the gap between their own standards of living and those of the West, and that the existence of the gap itself is due, at best, to the callous indifference of the West to the welfare of other peoples, and at worst, to a deliberate holding back in the past of economic development in the ex-colonies in the interests of the metropolitan areas. And this demand for economic aid is of course put forward in terms which deny any right to those from whom the aid comes to supervise its use from the point of view of policy or efficiency.

As was pointed out by at least two Asian speakers at Milan, this attitude has important repercussions on the internal affairs of newly enfranchised countries as well as on contemporary international relations. All ideologies have their scapegoats, and the function of a scapegoat is to prevent one from tackling one's own weaknesses. If the poverty of some countries can all be attributed to outside forces, and with it all the failings of their social and political systems, there is no incentive for a rational examination of what their own resources can provide and of what must be done to make the best use of them.

The attitude that the underdeveloped countries have a legitimate claim for aid is one which is supported—and was indeed at Milan—by the argument that the alternative is to see these countries fall under the Communist yoke. Quite apart from the natural reluctance of the West to see further countries fall under Communist control, it is also argued that the accretion of strength which this would bring to the Communist *bloc* is something which the West cannot afford. If Asia and Africa go, so too will North-Atlantica. Now in all such arguments a number of quite separate questions are raised and in a dangerously confused form. There is first of all, the assumption that "poverty equals Communism," that is to say that unless the existing régimes can do more to meet the physical needs of the people, they will be forced to give way to Communist régimes who will at least offer to do more for them, and by sheer ruthlessness may actually be able to do more, certainly in the short run. The trouble is that the equation is by no means self-evident, and does not correspond to any historical analysis of how Communism has in fact come to flourish in different societies or how it has actually come into power in some of them. And by assuming the equation, one is probably prevented from thinking this problem through and coming to a conclusion more in accordance with observed fact. This, however, is not the most dangerous form of this argument; for it is clear that a healthy social order—other things being equal—is more resistant to Communist infiltration in the absence of overwhelming external force, and that one of the characteristics of such a healthy social order is a rate of economic growth not too hopelessly out of accord with the expectations of the more active and more vocal parts of the population.

A much more insidious argument is that which assumes that the underdeveloped countries have two alternative paths of economic growth open to them. They can either choose a free economy (not necessarily without a good deal of state intervention of the Western type) and use aid from NorthAtlantica to help achieve it, or they can choose the Soviet type of advance and get Soviet aid in order to do so. In this sense the underdeveloped countries see themselves as being put up for auction between the two great power-*blocs*, or as exercising on North-Atlantica a form of direct and perhaps rewarding political blackmail, to which the Egyptian arms deal with Czechoslovakia may perhaps be taken as a political parallel.

The point here is of course that the whole notion of the world-situation from which this idea derives is based on an interpretation of the Soviet attitude which will scarcely survive serious examination. Aid from the Soviet *bloc* cannot in the long run be compatible with the idea of national self-determination which is the root idea of the whole ideology we are discussing, because it must ultimately mean incorporation

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within the Soviet *bloc* and the determination of the pace and scale of its economic development in accordance with a central plan. Such economic involvement cannot also help but be used in order to assist in the transformation of the whole of society—not just of its economic institutions—on the Soviet model. Why should the Russians repudiate their own ideology to suit the convenience of Asians, or Africans? And what sign is there in anything they have done or said to lead one to suppose that they intend to do so? It is not simply that the Asians or Africans would be asked to do without the parliamentary forms of liberal democracy—they are perfectly entitled to say that if they can have more bread for the hungry by jettisoning them, that is what they will do. What they must accept goes far deeper than this, and means above all, not just the sacrifice of individual freedoms which they may regard as secondary, but of national freedoms also which is what they presumably care about most. It is a fact that China is rapidly disproving the claims once advanced by people like K. M. Pannikar as to the possibility of separate forms of development within the overall Soviet pattern; but the lesson has not been learned—as has been shown so abundantly during the visit of Bulganin and Khrushchev to India and Burma. The habit of using the "Soviet alternative" as a weapon with which to blackmail the West is likely to prevent any real examination by people in the underdeveloped countries as to what that alternative really amounts to.

Nothing is more necessary for the health of the whole international order than that the newly enfranchised countries should find for themselves foreign policies embodying their own aspirations certainly, but also in accordance with objective fact. They must begin by understanding the Communists, whose pressure upon them is in most cases the more immediate. But they must also do more to understand the West. And they may then find that the argument based on the alleged self-interest of the West is not as convincing as they appear to think. Certainly it is in the interest of NorthAtlantica to prevent the further expansion of the Soviet *bloc* and to employ part of its resources for that purpose. But there are competing demands for these resources, and it is not immediately obvious how they should be divided as between the needs of armament, those of the weaker members of NorthAtlantica itself, and finally, those of the "underdeveloped" countries. As Peter Wiles pointed out at Milan, to accept the demands of the underdeveloped countries alongside our own peoples' belief in their right to an increasing standard of living, means to require a rate of productive growth unattainable under the present conditions of western capitalism or socialism. To shift to a system based entirely on criteria of productivity means the removal from our own system of such checks as are inherent in a free trade-unionism and other valued features of it; it means in fact adopting a system in many respects much closer to the Soviet one —in other words a large-scale sacrifice of individual and group freedoms. We may possibly have no alternative; but we shall certainly wish to decide for ourselves whether or not this is true. If the only way to defend freedom where it exists is to begin by abolishing it, is it right to act thus? It has taken centuries for the West to reach its admittedly imperfect approach to the idea of a free society; ought it not rather to adopt a Byzantine attitude towards this inheritance, to concentrate on its preservation and trust to some modern equivalent to a fortified frontier to prevent it from being overwhelmed? Certainly if we are sincere when we say that "containment" is not enough, that we still hope to see freedom begin to spread within the Communist world itself, it is vital that a living alternative to the Communist model should exist somewhere in the world.

Two other points are worth making in this context. In the first place, if the demand for aid from NorthAtlantica is couched in terms of the common threat from the Soviet *bloc*, its effectiveness—granted the moods of democratic electorates—will depend on the degree of intensity with which this threat presents itself from time to time. A relaxation in Soviet pressure may thus lead to a sudden scaling down of aid and render ineffective much long-term planning in the underdeveloped countries themselves. In the second place, such wholly political arguments tend to push into the background the technical questions of the form such aid should take. Under colonial rule or in situations where the lending country could exercise a degree of political control, the investment of private capital took place at rates largely determined by the comparative profitability of such investments. It has been made clear that most at any rate of the recently enfranchised States are in no mood to give assurances of the kind that would satisfy private capitalists. Why should the latter then risk more Abadans? Furthermore, the employment of foreign experts during the transitional period while an indigenous technical class is being built up has depended in the past on special rates of pay, expatriation allowances, and so on. These again now appear in many quarters to carry with them a suggestion of the old superiority claimed by the peoples of NorthAtlantica. On the other hand, why should someone from NorthAtlantica, with many

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opportunities of employment nearer home, seek it in a strange climate and alien atmosphere if he has neither the impulse of imperial service, nor the lure of a larger personal income?

The first point could be met by direct financial aid as between governments, or channelled through international institutions; but this depends on the willingness of the tax-payers of NorthAtlantica to accept this as a continuing burden. The second point can hardly be met at all by State action except by still further inroads on personal liberty. It is also only if the case for aid be generally accepted as a moral imperative that Western trade unionists and others whose cooperation is necessary can be got to assist in the measures for "training on the job," which are essential if a high rate of development is to be maintained.

For these reasons three conclusions seem inescapable. In so far as assistance in raising the standards of living of the underdeveloped countries is to be a permanent charge on NorthAtlantica, this can only be so if the notion of a community of obligations which increasingly governs the internal arrangements of Western societies is accepted in the wider sphere of international relations. In the nature of things, this must take time; new moral standards demanding new sacrifices do not emerge overnight. And some of the actions, and still more some of the language of the leaders of the newly enfranchised States is hardly calculated to assist this process in the West.

Secondly, the burden of creating the institutions of a free society and of spreading its assumptions among their peoples rests squarely upon the shoulders of these same leaders. Freedom cannot be conferred from outside.

Finally, it is the underdeveloped countries that must largely take the initiative in finding the technical means by which the general concept of aid can be translated into practical reality under modern conditions.

Before closing I would like to repeat and amplify one more point which I tried to make at Milan. If it is necessary that NorthAtlantica discard those feelings of racial superiority which have contributed to the odium often attached to it in Asia and Africa, it is equally important that the underdeveloped countries should discard a certain inferiority complex which often manifests itself by lofty claims to cultural or even moral superiority as against the West. Mr. Nehru's foreign policy may be wiser than that of Western statesmen or less wise; but as has been shown in the Kashmir case, to look no further, it is just as much bounded by considerations of interest as the policy of any other sovereign country. Nor do Western intellectuals assist in producing a healthy relationship with the newly enfranchised peoples by proclaiming the guilt of their own nations, and acting as though they had something to expiate. The record of Western imperialism can hardly yet be judged, as future historians may be able to judge it. Its retreat, for good or evil, is proceeding at such a speed that it will soon be an accomplished fact. What remains true is that, whatever the cultural achievements of Asia and Africa have been in the past, these continents have no tradition of a social order based upon the ideas of freedom that they now regard as their right. The building of the new nations is being done on Western models—and where these models are repudiated, it is in favour of Soviet Communism, itself the offshoot or perversion of a Western creed. There is no reason why these countries should be ashamed of borrowing, nor we of lending. The conditions exist for a dialogue between equals and one based on mutual respect. It is the only kind of dialogue worth having.

Max Beloff

Oxford

"The Soviet Crisis"

My attention has been drawn to an article in the August issue of Encounter in which Mr. Colin Clark, in the course of a sweeping attack on American students of Soviet economic affairs, criticises some statements and calculations of my own. It is easy to answer this criticism and I do so later, but Mr. Clark's references to myself are less important than his wholesale condemnation of a large group of scholars concerning whose work he is obviously ill-informed. It is, therefore, necessary to begin any reply to him with a look at the larger issues that he raises.

Mr. Clark sets out on the trail of "some interesting myths and half-truths" about the rate of growth of the Soviet economy, and traces the crime—"by a curious paradox," he admits—to the doorstep of the "type of learned man [who] seems to be relatively more abundant in the United States than in Europe." The trouble, it appears, is that "there are now in the United States a number of large, well-financed, well-known institutions for the carrying out of research into the economic institutions of the Soviet Union, and they are producing, on the whole, second-rate and uncritical material." These serious charges are offered for the reader's acceptance largely on Mr. Clark's word. Unfortunately for Mr. Clark's thesis, the modicum

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of evidence that he does adduce disintegrates rapidly under scrutiny. The paradox is of his own making.

As proof of the allegedly inferior quality of the research Mr. Clark offers his impression that the American "experts" lack answers to such "simple questions" (I might add, simpler to ask than to answer) as these: "(1) What is the Russian population, and how rapidly is it increasing? (2) What is the average Russian consumption per head of the principal foodstuffs, and how does it compare with that of thirty or forty years ago? (3) What is the amount of housing space occupied by the average Russian family?" I don't know which specific "experts" have failed this test, but directed against the whole group the charge is utter nonsense. Is Mr. Clark ignorant of the work of Lorimer, Kulischer, and Eason on Soviet population? Where in the free world has more careful work on Soviet demography been done in recent years than by these scholars and their associates? As for the supply and consumption of foodstuffs, is Mr. Clark unaware of the voluminous studies of Jasny, Volin, and Timoshenko on Soviet agriculture, or of Mrs. Chapman's careful and penetrating investigation of consumer purchasing power? As for the availability of housing, the only monograph devoted primarily to this problem was published in New York last year (by Sosnovy), and (interestingly) the figures on floor space *per capita* given by Mr. Clark's article are virtually identical with Sosnovy's. Most of these studies were supported by "large, well-financed, well-known institutions," universities, and foundations, whose allegedly insidious influence Mr. Clark deplores. Their results are well known to students of the Soviet economy in America and elsewhere. Is Mr. Clark really not acquainted with them or does he only pretend to ignore them? The answer is not easy, because contrary to what an unwary reader might infer, when he finally comes to his own interpretation of the Soviet economy, Mr. Clark strangely fails to take sharp issue with the consensus of American academic opinion on the subject. On many basic counts (reliability of Soviet statistics, population, manpower, agriculture, housing, etc.) he is actually in such close agreement with it that, at least by virtue of his present article, he might qualify for membership in that "most oleaginous type of Mutual Admiration Society" which he gratuitously believes American scholarship to represent.

In Mr. Clark's view the fault of the American "experts" lies in misdirected knowledge as well as in ignorance, and as an instance of such useless knowledge he cites (of all things) "information about the production of sulphuric acid" in the Soviet Union. The example is inept, for (to my knowledge) there is no published study of the industry; unfortunately so, for sulphuric acid happens to be an important commodity for both industry and agriculture. In general, Mr. Clark seems to have very little interest in the growth of Soviet industrial capacity—witness his selection of "simple questions." American scholars certainly agree that population problems and living standards are important, but perhaps they are not out of order in thinking that attention must also be given to one of the most significant historical facts of our time, the industrialisation of the Soviet Union.

Next Mr. Clark examines an essay of mine on the national income of the U.S.S.R., which appeared in a symposium on *Soviet Economic Growth*, 1953, edited by Abram Bergson. This, I suppose, is intended to illustrate "uncritical" American scholarship, but again the evidence is threadbare. First (with regard to the findings themselves, he mentions only one instance where his results are at odds with mine. His revised computations, Mr. Clark informs the reader without indicating where they can be seen, show an average rate of growth of total Soviet production of 4½ per cent per year over the period 1928–40; my figure in the above-mentioned essay is 6½–7 per cent per annum for 1928–37. Actually, the difference between the two results is less than it seems to be. Since the Soviet national product increased little (in comparable territory) between 1937 and 1940, for *identical* periods the difference (I estimate roughly) would be cut in half, and thus would come close to the margin of error that can reasonably be expected in such calculations. Moreover, the difference is *a priori* in the right direction, considering the nature of our respective weighting systems. Mr. Clark implies that his calculations in terms of world prices are more appropriate than those based on the Soviet economy's own scarcity relationship. Many statisticians and economists today would not agree with him, since each set of weights has its own logic and purpose.

Noting that I inquire into the rate of growth in the years 1948–50, Mr. Clark remonstrates that "it is quite impermissible to use such a period as 1948–50 to estimate a trend and project it into the future," because post-war recovery was still going on and "growth was still at a rate well above the normal." Hear, hear! This is just what he could have read in my essay; *viz.*, on page 10: "The carrying over of reconstruction into our two-year period probably meant a higher rate of expansion of the national product, compared with some sort of 'normal' situation." And as for projecting the trend, the *whole point* of the second half of my essay is

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that one *must not*. I am willing to assume that Mr. Clark read only the first half.

Mr. Clark's reference to Dr. Jasny's national income estimates for support of his own lower figure of the rate of growth only serves to reveal his confusion. The fact is that Dr. Jasny's estimates, though far below Soviet claims, are the *highest* produced by an independent investigator. For the pre-war years they are double (8–9 per cent) Mr. Clark's figure; while for the years 1948–50 Dr. Jasny finds a rate of growth "not significantly under 13 per cent per year," and criticises my estimate for being much too *low* (*Social Research*, Spring 1954)! Even from the point of view of methodology alone it is hard to see why Mr. Clark would approve of Dr. Jasny's computations of national income, for the latter employs the very weights (1926–7 prices, corrected for inflation) that the former categorically rejects.

In another personal reference Mr. Clark finds "particularly inept" some remarks appended to my essay by Professor Bergson, in which he inquired into the mutual consistency of the estimates of national income and industrial production presented at the conference. Anyone who troubles to read Professor Bergson's comment will see at once that Mr. Clark has wholly misconstrued its meaning. Nor was the discussion of my paper—or any other paper in the group, to my knowledge—"carefully rehearsed," as my critic hastens to conclude.

To return to my infamous essay, Mr. Clark is kind enough to mention that I am not alone at fault, but that my conclusions, despite their tentative nature, have been invested with unwarranted finality by "cursory and secondhand headers." I presented my figure as "a very preliminary hypothesis," and was careful (as my critic mentions) to follow it with a question mark in the central tabulation of various alternative estimates. Still, he claims, the result has been misinterpreted. This, if true, is a professional hazard of which my critic is undoubtedly aware. Would he maintain that no numerical estimate of Soviet economic growth—except his own, of course—be published lest it be misunderstood in underdeveloped countries and by "busy men of affairs . . . journalists of good repute, diplomats, and professors"; that is to say, lest it have undesirable political effects? Suppression of the results of research from political motive is nothing new, though its geographical locus usually lies east of Oxford. Those familiar with the Soviet scene know only too well where this attitude leads. Besides, elementary scholarship should caution one in this regard: after all, 4½ per cent *might* be wrong, too.

GREGORY GROSSMAN
University of California
Berkeley, California

[*Mr. Clark replies:*

It was through no fault on Mr. Grossman's part that his own very tentative conclusions were elevated by a

> ". . . chorus of indolent reviewers
> —irresponsible indolent reviewers"

into a general statement that the Soviet economy was growing and must inevitably continue to grow faster than any other in the world. These misfortunes happen to all of us.

> "If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
> Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools."

What I do say is that when, as so often happens, these entirely false ideas are disseminated around the world, it is the duty of the well-informed to use all their skill and strength in attempting to counteract them.

I am well aware of all (or nearly all) of the works which he cites on Soviet population, housing, and agriculture. That is just what I am saying—after studying them carefully I find them entirely inadequate to answer my "simple questions." This is not necessarily a reproach of individual researchers, who have worked quite well in their own parts of the field. What I am complaining is that, with such large resources of money and skilled manpower apparently available, so much effort has been wasted on trivial tasks, and altogether inadequate work done on these basic questions.

The industrialisation of Soviet Russia has been an important historical event. But it is not so important as to entitle it to crowd everything else out of consideration, as it appears to have done. It is perhaps natural that big American institutions, in a *milieu* predominantly industrial, located among universities which lead the world in the study of industrial economics, should concentrate their attention upon Soviet industry (even to the point where they try to construct input-output tables for it, which seems to me rather a futile task) and take only a passing interest in matters of population, housing, and agriculture. But do they not realise how, unconsciously, they are playing the Soviet game? population, housing, and agriculture are precisely the subjects from which the Soviet propagandists are most anxious to distract our attention.]

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BOOKS

Bridge and the Human Condition

THERE is a madness in method, as well as a method in madness, and at times it is hard to tell the two apart. What are we to make of the scholar who believes that economic depressions are caused by variations in sun-spots, and who writes a huge tome full of differential equations to prove his case? He may be a genius, or he may be a crank—one must be circumspect and deferential, even while crossing oneself to ward off the evil eye. Alchemists of the old school we now know how to dispose of, and astrologers too; yet not so long ago they were very problematic indeed. For the dividing line between reality and illusion is itself a shadowy thing, being neither a matter of logic nor of discrete facts, but of mere factuality in the broadest sense of the term—that is to say, a matter of habitual appreciation of what a "fact" is, of what is to be taken as relevant and what not. Reality is, from the point of view of pure reason, arbitrary. And that is why we do not argue with paranoiacs, but put them away or else try to cure them by winning them over to our sense of what life and the world is all about.

This question became of some importance to me in the course of studying a small brochure, *Theory of Games as a Tool for the Moral Philosopher*,* by Mr. R. B. Braithwaite, the new Knightsbridge Professor of Moral Philosophy at Cambridge. After reading it, I saw clearly that one of us must be slightly mad. And, being easily intimidated, I was moved to conclude that it was I. The knowledge that a special indulgence in the matter of sanity is accorded to editors consoled me little. The prospect of reviewing the book, I confess, rather more.

Mr. Braithwaite's lecture is about morals. Naturally enough, being in such a condition as I am, this subject is a source of much perplexity to me. The truth is that there are many occasions when I do not know whether or not I am doing the right thing. Mr. Braithwaite, being what he is, i.e. a professor of moral philosophy, is inevitably in better circumstances. He has devised a mathematical method to determine what is the right thing. I do not pretend to understand the details of this method, which reaches into the higher mathematics, but the general principles are simple enough; and, in any case, Mr. Braithwaite makes it quite clear that *he* is the one who, having the mathematics and the method, will give the good advice, so I know as much about it as I need to.

His method is an adaptation of Von Neumann's and Morgenstern's "Theory of Games," developed in the United States in the course of the last fifteen years as a theory which, using probability curves and the like, can inform various contestants in more or less competitive situations of the best strategies available to them. The scheme has been applied to economics, with what success I do not know. (An Oxford economist, to whom I turned for enlightenment on this

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point, informed me that it is all very brilliant but has nothing to do with economics; a Princeton mathematician on the other hand told me no less flatly that it is of no serious interest to mathematicians but will doubtless be very useful to economists.) It has also been applied to poker by Mr. John McDonald, an editor of *Fortune* magazine in New York, in a book not published in this country; and since Mr. McDonald is still with *Fortune*, instead of sunning himself on his yacht off the Riviera, I can only surmise that its success has been something short of spectacular. Mr. Braithwaite is the first person I know to apply the Theory of Games to an ethical problem.

His problem, as he defines it, is this:

> Suppose that Luke and Matthew are both bachelors, and occupy flats in a house which has been converted into two flats by an architect who had ignored all considerations of acoustics. Suppose that Luke can hear everything louder than a conversation that takes place in Matthew's flat, and vice versa; but that sounds in the two flats do not penetrate outside the house. Suppose that it is legally impossible for either to prevent the other from making as much noise as he wishes, and economically or sociologically impossible for either to move elsewhere. Suppose further that each of them has only the hour from nine to ten in the evening for recreation, and that it is impossible for either to change to another time. Suppose that Luke's form of recreation is to play classical music on the piano for an hour at a time, and that Matthew's amusement is to improvise jazz on the trumpet for an hour at once. And suppose that whether or not either of them performs on one evening has no influence, one way or the other, upon the desires of either of them to perform on any other evening; so that each evening's happenings can be treated independently. Suppose that the satisfaction each derives from playing his instrument for the hour is affected, one way or the other, by whether or not the other is also playing. . . . Suppose that they put to me the problem: Can any plausible principle be devised stating how they should divide the proportion of days on which both of them play, Luke alone plays, Matthew alone plays, neither play, so as to obtain maximum production of satisfaction compatible with fair distribution?

To the above suppositions, Mr. Braithwaite adds still another: that it is possible to express in quantitative terms the relative preferences of Luke and Matthew for the four alternatives. This done, he proceeds to a breath-

Bruce Marshall

GIRL IN MAY

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CONSTABLE

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takingly ingenious series of computations, the upshot of which is that "Luke and Matthew should agree together that one or the other (but not both) should play every evening, and that the playing time should be divided in the ratio seventeen evenings for Luke to twenty-six evenings for Matthew." (The seeming injustice arises out of differences postulated in Luke's and Matthew's quantitative scale of preferences, the pianist preferring silence to both playing together, the trumpeter the opposite.) This solution provides the maximum of satisfaction to both, given the conditions. Furthermore, if Luke refuses to recognise this as a fair solution, he can in effect be coerced to do so, for Mr. Braithwaite will then provide Matthew and Luke with new "prudential" strategies suitable for a completely competitive situation, and if one of the pair sticks to the strategy the other will deviate only to his ultimate disadvantage. In this case, it means that Matthew will play the trumpet every evening and Luke the piano on an average of twenty-three evenings out of forty. Should they tire of this quarrelsome state, they can always agree to revert to the "fair" strategies.

This is all very interesting, as they say. It is also very baffling for someone who, like myself, lives in a different world from Mr. Braithwaite. The kinds of Lukes and Matthews I know are, unlike Mr. Braithwaite's, definitely mortal; and, since their years are numbered, they are grossly uninterested in the averages of infinite series. More than that, they have various specific qualities: one of them is likely to be older or younger than the other, in better or worse health, with weaker or stronger homicidal impulses. They would have no use for Mr. Braithwaite's strategies, preferring some of their own: I know a Matthew who would blandly install an amplifying system, and a Luke who would pump sleeping-gas upstairs through the drainpipe. Moreover, they could not use Mr. Braithwaite's strategies even if they wanted to, because—O depths of unreason!—they rarely know their own minds, to say nothing of having a neat scale of preferences.

Mr. Braithwaite's universe is so radically different from mine that we even have different notions of what is an ethical problem. For me, it is what people ought to do. For him, it is what a professor of moral philosophy ought to say *if* people address themselves to him and *if* they have the foresight to come provided with quantifiable scales of preference. The scales themselves Mr. Braithwaite apparently regards as sacrosanct. The problem is to reconcile the plurality of them, not to revise any one. If Mr. Braithwaite were approached jointly by a group of cannibals and a society of missionaries, he could show them how to achieve either the fairest or the most prudential strategy: he himself would question neither the gospel nor the pot.

By some inner motion of the life-force, I was impelled after reading Mr. Braithwaite to turn from the Theory of Games to the game itself. That is to say, I began to browse through a couple of bridge books that had reached my desk. Vaguely I had the idea of improving my play, but deep down—I can see it now in retrospect—I was seeking company in my misery, to escape from the piano-playing of Luke (seventeen evenings out of forty-three) or the trumpeting of Matthew (twenty-six evenings out of forty-three) into the chattering company of *mes semblables, mes frères*. Reading Mr. Guy Ramsey's *Aces All*,* I was childishly pleased to see that his seventeen star players belonged to the human race as I remember it: nervous, frustrated, reckless, perpetually at the mercy of luck, yet never settling for anything less than the ultimate triumph here and now. Prudent they are not; nor are they fair; and their calculations go wildly wrong—when their miscalculations do not go wildly right. Like me and mine, they are implicated in primordial error, and there comes a day when they go down. If perhaps they play the piano and the trumpet for an hour each evening, they also chase after false gods, and indulge in Phantom Sacrifices.

In contract bridge I rediscovered the human condition, as it existed before the Theory of Games. It is a condition marked, in the grim word of Martin Heidegger, by *Geworfenheit*—which may be roughly translated as "tricks-thrown-away." In an earlier time, I would have found Dr. Paul Sterns's and A. J. Smith's *Sorry Partner!*† as bleak as eavesdropping at a confessional. Reading

* Museum Press. 10s. 6d.
† Faber. 6s.

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it post-Braithwaite, I found its report on one hundred and twenty misplayed bridge hands so many entrance tickets to the human race. Or to what used to pass as such, for that was before the game itself, in which a life was lived and lost, gave way to a new and more rational order, in which Luke and Matthew are not apostles but music-makers, and joy is distributed along a probability curve, from here to infinity.

Irving Kristol

AUGUSTAN LETTERS

WE HAVE not got any of Homer's or Shakespeare's private letters, and the loss to us is probably slight. It is probably true to say of those ever unknowable men that so much of literary greatness was sunk into their published works that there was little left for the private delectation of friends, and nothing better than what we have already. For first-class letter-writing it is far safer to descend the single and immeasurable interval to the class which stands next to the immortal one. Byron was a poet of enduring fame, but I for one could feel more certain of his immortality if he had not written letters as memorable as his poetry. Did he ever in "the works" write a line about Marshal Blücher as good as his private jotting: "I never saw a thing of such an age so unvenerable"? There are probably exceptions to the rule that the private writings of the greatest authors are very slight things compared to the public writings which made them great, but the letters of Gibbon are not among them.

By the copious and spirited labours of Mr. J. E. Norton, all that can be traced of Gibbon's correspondence has been assembled in three splendid volumes* worthy of the fame of their subject. The first letter belongs to 1750, when Gibbon was thirteen years old. There is then a gap of three years, after which every year of his life is represented till his death in 1794. This is the first comprehensive collection to be issued since Lord Ernle's edition of the Gibbon manuscripts in the British Museum, published by John Murray in 1896. Mr. Norton's editing, so far as a general reader can judge, is impeccable, and we now have a full view of the great historian's private life. Later scholars can have little if anything to add: the work has been done. Mr. Norton says in his introduction that there is small likelihood of any sensational discovery, such as that of the Boswell papers, but he adds that he does "sometimes wonder what happened to the MS. of *The Decline and Fall*."

The most evident loss from Gibbon's letters is of those which he must have written as a young man to the friends of his youth, and of those which he is known to have written in middle age to his intellectual peers. These last, Mr. Norton remarks, are but inadequately represented by his correspondence with William Robertson and David Hume. (What a pity for us that he did not hit it off with Doctor Johnson.) The loss, however, is so handsomely compensated by the letters to his step-mother, Dorothea Gibbon, the best of his private writing, and to his friend, John Holroyd, later Lord Sheffield, that there is not much to lament.

The letters are not exciting, they are not easily enjoyed until long study has caught the reader up into Gibbon's usually placid but always energetic life, but once the reader has been so caught up, the interest remains compelling, and few books can give us a more complete illusion of living in a delectable department of the 18th century. We first meet Gibbon (after the glimpse of the boy of thirteen) in Lausanne at the moment of his return to Protestantism from his brief youthful Roman Catholic escapade. If there is little sign of the growing master in the

* *The Letters of Edward Gibbon*. Edited by J. E. NORTON. Cassell. 8 guineas.

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letters of this time to his father and his beloved aunt, Catherine Porten, there is curious and perverse evidence of an unusual sensitiveness to words. Although he had never been out of England before this first Lausanne period, his grasp of his own language was so weak that his use of it became marred by absurd Gallicisms after a few months' study of French. He tells us in his memoirs that "at the expense of many tears and some blood I purchased the knowledge of the Latin syntax." It was no part of education then to employ the birch further for the cultivation of native idiom, and Gibbon's English had clearly been neglected. It grew up wild. He is an argument for classical studies, and perhaps against "Eng. Lit." There is no evidence that his intense devotion to French did him any harm. I know of only one intolerable Gallicism in *The Decline and Fall* when, in the chapter on the origin of Islam, he uses "legumes" as though it is an English word. One of the oddities of his story is that although his first published work was in French, and his first ambition was to be a French writer, his use of the French language remained uncertain and erroneous to the end. In adolescence this lord of language was without a language.

THE author of the greatest of all Roman histories is revealed to us slowly in the course of these papers, at a tempo as majestic as that of one of his own chapters, and every reader is likely to find a personal point of detection. I find one in a letter to a Hampshire neighbour on whose grounds he unwittingly trespassed in 1758. "I am no sportsman, Sir, and was as much tempted this morning by the beauty of the day and the pleasure of the ride as by the hopes of any sport. I went out, and, neither acquainted with the bounds of the manor nor your request to the neighbouring gentlemen, could only follow my groom where he led me." Heralded by this priggish communication, the vast glittering procession in which period was to follow noble period through fourteen hundred years, is remote but already in sight. A few years later comes a dramatic moment. In 1764 he wrote to his father a letter which is remarkably free from the restraint which characterised most of his correspondence with Edward Gibbon senior. It is dated October 9th, six days, according to his own account, before the idea of his history "first started" to his mind. "I am now, dear Sir, at Rome. If it was difficult before to give you or Mrs. Gibbon any account of what I saw it is impossible here. I have already found such a fund of entertainment for a mind somewhat prepared for it by an acquaintance with the Romans, that I am really almost in a dream. Whatever ideas books may have given us of the greatness of that people, their accounts of the most flourishing state of Rome fall infinitely short of the picture of its ruins. I am convinced there never existed such a nation and I hope for the happiness of mankind that there never never will again. I was this morning upon the top of Trajan's pillar. I shall not attempt a description of it. Only figure to yourself a column 140 foot high of the purest white marble composed only of about 30 blocks and wrought into bas-reliefs with as much taste and delicacy as any chimney-piece at Up-Park." This is the only solemn meditation on Rome to occur in the letters.

There is a very interesting and long letter of 1772 addressed anonymously to Richard Hurd, later Bishop of Lichfield, in which he enquires into the veracity of the Book of Daniel. The letter has not been republished in full since 1811. Is it fanciful to deduce from Gibbon's evidently strong preoccupation with that book of prophecy the origin of a superb passage in his masterpiece? In the Old Testament we read this of Nebuchadnezzar's vision:

> I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the heighth thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the heighth thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth. The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heavens dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.

This is how Gibbon introduces his account of the pontificate of Gregory the Great:

> Amidst the arms of the Lombards, and under the despotism of the Greeks, we again enquire into the fate of Rome, which had reached, about the close of the sixth century, the lowest point of her depression. By the removal of the seat of empire, and the successive loss of the provinces, the sources of public and private opulence were exhausted; the lofty tree, under whose shade

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the nations of the earth had reposed, was deprived of its leaves and branches, and the sapless trunk was left to wither on the ground.

APART from the gout, Gibbon's life, as Lytton Strachey justly observed, was a study in the higher hedonism, in "golden mediocrity," an idyll perfectly suited to his temperament and the production of his colossal work. We follow him here from his love affair with Suzanne Curchod (later Madame Necker), through his militia service, from the inception to the flowering of the long friendship with Holroyd, through the House of Commons, the Board of Trade, his financial worries, his second and self-imposed exile to Lausanne, and to his last years. In a moment of jesting he told Holroyd (who like him was a Major of Militia), why the letters which tell us of this life are not great ones. "If you would hearken to the voice of reason," he wrote in 1778, "you would acknowledge, that when the mind and hand are fatiguing with writing of an Emperor, I can feel very little disposition to write to a Major." Nevertheless, echoes of the tremendous style which he was perfecting every morning of his life grow continually more audible in these letters written during his evenings. As the years of composition join those of publication the genius spills over into the chat, and it is usually in letters to Dorothea that we are dazzled by a great three-limbed sentence lying across the page. This usually happens when he is writing about himself. It has been said that Gibbon was a born memorialist because he effortlessly and habitually brought to his private affairs all the gravity that he more expectedly brought to such subjects as the fall of a civilisation. To say so is to make him out more pompous than he was, but for all that the idea is not untrue. Listen to how he told Dorothea that it might be cheaper for him to live abroad:

> I am not ignorant that a prudent man should adapt his arrangements to his fortune. Other countries of a less expensive cast, France, Switzerland, or perhaps Scotland may afford an humble Philosophical retreat to a man of Letters, nor should I suffer any accidental change of fortune, any fall in the World to affect my spirits or ruffle my tranquility. I have more than once balanced in my own mind the propriety or indeed the necessity of such a resolution.

And so on for a page.

THE SHIRT OF NESSUS

CONSTANTINE FITZ GIBBON

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Sm. Demy 8vo, 288 pp., Illustrated, 21s. net

CASSELL

The letters in the third volume are the most interesting. He had more leisure for private correspondence at Lausanne, and he probably took more pains with it than he had done before. And then, in his last five years, he had a great theme on which to discourse, the French Revolution. They were terrifying years for him, with the constant likelihood of French invasion across the Swiss border and plundering armies descending on a town which would "cut up fat." At first he consoled himself with escapist notions that the Revolution had deprived the French of patriotism and rendered their army incapable of battle, but, true to his nature, he ascertained facts at first hand.

> The [French] General holds a wolf by the ears; an officer who has seen his troops, about 18,000 men with a tremendous train of artillery represents them as a black, daring, desperate crew of buccaneers, rather shocking than contemptible; the officers (scarce a Gentleman among them) without servants, or horses, or baggage, lying *higgledy-piggledy* on the ground with the common men, yet maintaining a rough kind of discipline over them.

On his way back to England in 1793, after Lady Sheffield's death, he had to pass

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through the battle zone, and he did so with his usual admirable imperturbability. "I hear, as I am writing, the cannon of the siege of Mayence at the distance of twenty miles." He thought it a proof of the fatuity of the Revolution that it did not produce a "Cromwell or a Richelieu," but we must be careful not to look superiorly at a man because he failed to spot Bonaparte in the year of Toulon. The rest of Gibbon's life was spent in England, his happiness in his fame considerable but marred by gout and the disorder which killed him. His last courageous letters are his only famous ones, from their inclusion in Lord Sheffield's edition of the Memoirs.

SEEING Gibbon whole, or as whole as we can hope to, thanks to Mr. Norton, we find him a more engaging man than we might expect. He held an uncommonly high opinion of himself, but he had uncommon reasons for doing so, and his letters to Robertson and Hume are informed by genuine modesty. His pomposity and snobbishness, both of which were on the stupendous scale of his century, were well offset by his humour, and his alleged coldness of heart is contradicted by his long-suffering goodness to his not admirable father. This part of his conduct, indeed, must obliterate many sins. There is only one letter here which shows him in a thoroughly bad light, a letter written to Wilhelm de Sévery from England in September 1793. When he arrived at Sheffield Place after his long, dangerous errand of mercy to the grief-stricken widower, Gibbon found that his old friend, and the Holroyd daughters, had sufficiently recovered from the first shock of Lady Sheffield's death to be able to receive him cheerfully. He was absolutely furious. "*En verité le malade était à peu près gueri avant l'arrivée du médecin*," he wrote in his clumsy French, and proceeded to denigrating remarks worthier of some sour old spinster. Is one shocked? One would perhaps be more so if there were not that something about Gibbon (never more than here) that makes one smile. He was so very grand that the slips, the efforts to blanket middle-class birth, the wildly absurd face and figure, and the candour of his vanity, even at its most catty, have the effect of making him more human than he would otherwise be. It is almost possible to love him.

Christopher Sykes

SHORTS

THERE seem to have been curiously few interesting novels published during the past month (I write on what those who, like myself, regard the season as primarily a commercial man-trap, describe as "the *wrong* side of Christmas"). Only one, in fact, has come my way that seems worth noticing, so I propose to devote the bulk of this review to a number of recent collections of short stories.

The solitary novel is *A Dance in the Sun*,* by Dan Jacobson. Mr. Jacobson is a South African, his *locale* is the near-desert of the Karroo, his subject the uneasy relations between white and black. The plot is simple but ingenious: the narrator and his friend are hitch-hiking, and put up for the night in a small, rather derelict township *en route*—or, rather, off route, since a combination of circumstances has diverted them from the main road; quickly they find themselves caught up in an ambiguous drama that is taking place between the owners of the hotel and a Kaffir who has once been their servant; the action of the novel is confined, with Sophoclean

* *A Dance in the Sun*. By DAN JACOBSON. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 12s. 6d. (To be published on February 17th.)

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economy, to the events of the single night of their stay, and closes with a symbolic and strangely wry tableau that reminds one in some ways of the last pages of that classic commentary upon race-relations, *A Passage to India*, though Mr. Jacobson's conclusions are even more quizzical and less idealistic than Mr. Forster's.

This last is an exacting comparison indeed: yet *A Dance in the Sun* emerges by no means dishonourably from it. The plot is obviously chosen because of its possibilities for illustration of the subtle and complex tensions between black and white; but Mr. Jacobson's book, like Mr. Forster's, works out this plot, not in terms of lay figures who are to "go through the motions" of a previously determined catastrophe, but through fully realised characters who are unique individual humans first, and protagonists of "white settler" or "black labourer" only second. It also avoids the prime pitfall of the novel with a "political" plot—that is, writing about persons who, however interesting for the political and social pressures and groups which they illustrate or represent, are nevertheless in their un-political, un-social selves not interesting at all. Mr. Jacobson has made the narrator and his friend extremely intelligent and likeable young men: even when they are brought into contact with tedious, ridiculous, or blatantly offensive persons, it is always through their eyes that these persons are seen—we are interested in how the intelligent react to the stupid, whereas in the majority of "realistic" novels we are presented only with the reactions of the stupid to each other. This device, of the intelligent narrator at bay in a comparatively obtuse world, is a simple but very effective (and even, I think, perhaps original) one. But the invention of the brilliantly simple is one of Mr. Jacobson's *fortes*: witness the frame-device of the hitch-hike, which has endless possibilities ranging from detective novel to picaresque romance, and is (so far as I am aware) used for the first time —at any rate in serious literature—in this novel.

This is a good "straight" novel, with all the virtues that the epithet implies: fine characterisation, ingenious narrative, suspense, stylistic good manners. I recommend it as the most intelligent, the least sentimental, sensational, or pretentious, South African novel that I have come across.

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JONATHAN CAPE

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Any consideration of recent short stories should begin with mention of the *Complete Short Stories** of D. H. Lawrence, now issued as volumes 11–13 of the Phœnix Edition of his works. Lawrence and Kipling were the masters of the short story in the first half of this century. Each had supreme talent in the form, amounting (for what words are worth) to genius. Each had an extremely idiosyncratic and, to the majority, unpalatable view of life, to which he gave full rein in his stories. And the dynasts who direct the contemporary *comédie humaine* saw to it that these life-views should be farcically opposed; so that every afficionado of Kipling goes red in the face at the airiest murmur of the name of Lawrence, and every devotee of Lawrence goes blue in the face at the merest echo of the name of Kipling, and all the rest (ten men and a boy and alas! myself) go probably a rather unhealthy shade of puce at the lightest rumour of the name of either. In either case I feel that a giant talent has fallen into a dwarfish and unworthy hand, and the wastage makes me (inwardly) weep. The great majority of Lawrence's large output of short stories are incomparable examples of everything that that form should be: the most apparently trivial material opens at the touch of his finger upon profound vistas of experience and insight, the persons are individualised by two or three details picked with near-diabolical cunning, each story once told establishes itself immediately as a permanent item of the reader's mental furniture. And yet the "truths" revealed, however "convincing" artistically, are nevertheless (once out of the colour-enhancing sea of Lawrence's myth) seen to be untruths, half-truths, or (at best) "second-rate truths"—I mean the sort of truths which are so evident that they should serve as the premisses of art, not its conclusions. Lawrence was a tremendous shouter of second-rate truths: "sex is not without its bearing on the human condition," he would discover, and bellow it till the springs echoed. It is true that a large unleavened lump of his contemporaries was not even aware of such second-rate truths as this, however apparent: but the resulting temptation to shout rather than assume them is one that a really great writer would have stood out against.

Lawrence's "central situations," moreover, those which recur again and again in his writings, are seen to be neurotically compulsive rather than the fruit of a genuinely balanced insight. For instance, Lawrence's mother was an ex-schoolteacher married to a miner, and Lawrence himself a miner's son married to an aristocrat. Hence (and not from any unbiassed observation of life as it is lived) the fact that in all Lawrence's mixed-class love stories (*Lady Chatterley, Daughters of the Vicar*) it is the woman who belongs to the higher class, never the man. Hence also that scene (fraught, it seems to me, with every sort of bogus implication) that turns up time and again, like a recurring nightmare: that in which the genteel miner's wife is faced for the first time by the prospect of having to wash her husband's back (*A Sick Collier, Jimmy and the Desperate Woman*). The mentality of a woman who is prepared to go to bed with her husband but not to wash his back for him, does not seem to have struck Lawrence as a perverse one. Indeed Lawrence, in spite of the fact that a vociferous sect of -ites is at this moment proclaiming him the supremely sane and intelligent figure of our times, always strikes me as a dangerous neurotic whose delusion took the form of believing himself supremely sane.

Yet when one turns from these three maddening volumes, bristling with false values and written frequently in the vilest cook's-magazine style—

> "I love you," she said, her lips drawn to sobbing. He put down his head against her, unable to hear her, unable to bear the sudden coming of the peace and passion that almost broke his heart. They stood together in silence while the thing moved away a little. . . . And his mouth came to hers, and slowly her eyelids closed, as his mouth sought hers closer and closer, and took possession of her—

to Miss Patton's *A Piece of Luck*,* or Mr. Beachcroft's *Goodbye Aunt Hesther*,† or Mr. Chase's *The Honeymoon and A Religious Man*,‡ there can be nothing but a

* *The Complete Short Stories of D. H. Lawrence*. Heinemann. 3 volumes, 10s. 6d. each.

* *A Piece of Luck*. By Frances Gray Patton. Gollancz. 12s. 6d.

† *Goodbye Aunt Hesther*. By T. O. Beachcroft. The Bodley Head. 12s. 6d.

‡ *The Honeymoon and A Religious Man*. By Richard Chase. Hogarth, 12s. 6d.

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sense of anticlimax. Each of these authors writes "better" than Lawrence, has values that are more fundamentally human and sane; yet they forcibly illustrate the difference between a small talent well used and genius, however mishandled. In their hands the short story is a dead, an exploded form; capable of elaboration, of variation, but not of development. It is something that one "learns" (or even "is taught") to write; and, having learnt, exercises as a craft much like watch-mending or home-carpentry. Miss Patton is a terrifically competent American, mistress of wit, humour, pathos, insight, charm, style, maturity, etc., just as it says in the blurb. She writes of American small-town life in stories sometimes so short that they remind one of the old army notice, "If shorts are worn any shorter, shorts will be worn no longer." People are folks, and whatever is, is right. A suicidal horror and depression comes over me when I dip into this sort of American writing; I think, at the spectacle of so tight a little world without windows, a blind, draught-proof, centrally heated maisonnette without views or grounds—the sort of balloon that wants buckshot, the sort of gloss that wants scratching. But I have no doubt that a very large number of people will buy it, read it, and believe that they are enjoying it.

The effect of Mr. Beachcroft is not claustrophobic in this way. He has the competence but, mercifully, not the gloss. He is indeed an excellent writer in his class—entertaining, ingenious, sensible, inoffensive. The reader may find it interesting to compare his title-story with Lawrence's *The Lovely Lady*, to which it bears curious accidental resemblances: *Goodbye Aunt Hesther* is immensely assured and successful within its own limits, while Lawrence's story is really rather bad. And yet. . . .

The Honeymoon and A Religious Man, on the other hand, I found rather disappointing. The book consists of two short novels, or long short stories. This is a form that demands extreme compression and, in the mechanical sense, efficiency (such as that shown by Mr. Evelyn Waugh, for example, in *The Loved One*); for only the first alternative is viable—the short novel is still possible and profitable, the "long short" is not. Mr. Chase does not seem to me to show this efficiency. Again, the comparison with Lawrence will show where the weakness lies:

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*Winter's Tales** is an excellent illustrated collection produced for the Christmas market. It is planned to make it an annual event. The best contributions (apart from Mr. V. S. Pritchett's) seem to me to come from those (Kingsley Amis, L. P. Hartley) who are more distinguished in the field of the novel. The complex moral that might, I suppose, be drawn from this, would demand far more space than I have at my disposal.

Hilary Corke

* *Winter's Tales, 1.* Macmillan. 16s.

BEAVERBROOK

It is frequently asserted that the gap between articulate sections of English society and English mass opinion is considerable. The results of public-opinion polls and general elections would seem largely to confirm this assertion. The most usual example cited is the small weight which the views of the intelligentsia carry in this country as compared to Continental countries. A more striking and more important instance, I think, is the comparatively small effect produced on English public opinion by the loudly voiced materialistic views of the popular press and of important sections of the business community. Much is made nowadays of the materialism of the English people. In terms of religious belief or even of moral inertia this may be true; but there seems every reason to suppose that the cynical opportunism or even the gospel of success modified by sentimentality which has been so long preached in popular daily newspapers has made little headway among the majority of the population. Money, success, and a narrow national selfishness are stridently asserted, it is true, in many a saloon bar, in Wardour Street, or in some business circles; and the strident voice is seldom contradicted. It would be a fundamentally false estimate of the English character, however, to take this silence for agreement.

It has quite clearly been one of the fundamental mistakes in Lord Beaverbrook's career. Mr. Driberg's biography of Beaverbrook* disappoints in many ways, but perhaps chiefly in its failure seriously to analyse the gap between the powerful, able press lord and the public he has sought to rule. The omission is the more strange because Mr. Driberg's primary interest in Beaverbrook lies in his ultimate failure and his book is subtitled "A Study in Power and Frustration."

Lord Beaverbrook's life falls into four main sections. In the early years of this century he achieved his financial power in Canada—already at the age of twenty-six he was a millionaire. To the student of power this part of his career could be of immense interest. It is often easy to understand how power may be increased once a great fortune has been amassed, it is less easy to understand how this first step can be made. Mr. Driberg gives rather sketchy details of this period of his subject's life, though he underlines the vital importance of the Cement Deal Scandal in Beaverbrook's relations with his native country. His narrative is a little blurred, however, by his uncertainty whether to regard Aitken or his orthodox business opponents as the real villains of the piece. The sketchiness of this fascinating period in Beaverbrook's life is, of course, inevitable and sharpens the general impression that

* *Beaverbrook: A Study in Power and Frustration.* By Tom Driberg. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 21s. (To be published on February 17th.)

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the biography has been undertaken prematurely. Nevertheless it becomes clear that much of Beaverbrook's political programme has been conditioned by the desire to regain his native land's respect.

WITH Aitken's arrival in England in 1910 begins the second period of his life—the pursuit of direct political power. It is at once the most astonishing and the most important. Working through and on behalf of his ambitious fellow Canadian, Bonar Law, Beaverbrook played a major part in three political intrigues of the first importance—the substitution of Bonar Law for Balfour as leader of the Conservatives, the substitution of Lloyd George for Asquith as leader of the Coalition, the fall of Lloyd George by the secession of most of the Conservatives in his Ministry. The events of 1916 which led to the fall of Asquith cannot, I think, be overestimated. It was the end of a whole Whig era, an end of a whole cultivated, aristocratic world of reform. It brought to power for more than two decades a business Conservatism, it seemed a final victory for the "hard-faced men." But, as I have suggested earlier, the hold of business materialism on either the English ruling classes or the English electorate has never been complete. Even in its victory the business Conservatism of the 1930's was not the open materialist opportunism of the Press Lords. The measure of Beaverbrook's separation from English life even in this period of his victory lies in his hostility to Baldwin, the very type of the modified English business conservatism. The measure of Beaverbrook's uncertain grasp of English politics lies in the unreality of his Empire Free Trade Campaign.

The story of these very important intrigues has been often told and Mr. Driberg does not add to it greatly. He gives a fascinating letter to Balfour from his private secretary describing Bonar Law's part in the events of 1911. For the rest he seems largely to rely on the divergence between Beaverbrook's own accounts of the events of 1916 and 1918 and those contained in such books as Asquith's Memoirs, Petrie's life of Austen Chamberlain, and the Spender life of Asquith. It seems hardly necessary for him to stress the unsatisfactory and suggestive vagueness of Lord Beaverbrook's narratives

Pierre Gascar

BEASTS AND MEN

Translated by Jean Stewart

The Prix Goncourt, 1954, was awarded to the six short stories which open this book. Their theme is the tragic absence of communication between man and the animals, and it is realised with a poet's vision. Linked to the stories in feeling is *The Season of Death*, a long short story set in a P.O.W. camp.

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for those who have read *Politicians and the War* and *Politicians and the Press*. I cannot but think that in his hostility to his subject, Mr. Driberg has erred in not presenting more fully the serious arguments for Lloyd George's accession to power in 1916. If the war was lost without Lloyd George, all the intrigues were justified; if not, then the picture of politicians jockeying for power while millions were killed at the Front is revolting. It is also surely unjust to Lord Beaverbrook to make so little mention of the unpopular rôle he assumed in persuading his Conservative readers to accept the necessity of the Irish treaty.

Whatever the rights or wrongs, Beaverbrook played a vital part in the political events of 1911–18. He paid the price of his intrigue in general mistrust and in naïvely allowing his political future to be for ever blasted by accepting a peerage. One is reminded of Lord Shelburne, whose brilliant intrigues were equally rewarded by mistrust and political impotence.

BY CONTRAST the third phase of Beaverbrook's life from 1918 to 1940 when, as a newspaper proprietor, he tried to wield political power by indirect means is one of almost farcical pretence. It is true that in Baldwin he met an extraordinarily astute opponent. Nevertheless the gap between his aims and his achievements was vast. There has surely been no more absurd fantasy in English politics than the Empire Free Trade Campaign. It is surprising that Mr. Driberg, who is so adept and subtle in his sharp and sudden scratches, has not used his gift for irony more in this section. He does, however, give us many fascinating stories of newspaper life.

The last phase of Aircraft Production, Mission to Stalin, and Second Front Campaign is too close to us to be satisfactory material for biography. Mr. Driberg provides some curious peeps into the odd relationship of Churchill and Beaverbrook. It is clear, however, that his sympathy is not engaged with either man. Indeed this is one of the faults of the whole book. Beaverbrook's major fights were with Conservative or Liberal politicians with whom Mr. Driberg is only slightly more, if at all, in sympathy than he is with Beaverbrook himself. The result is a biography that is at once too partisan and yet not partisan enough.

Nevertheless he does succeed in giving a very lively picture of Beaverbrook as a man, largely in the quite brilliant sections of the book in which he describes the daily routine of a Press Lord's life. It is sad but hardly surprising that he has not brought the same life to Beaverbrook's public career. To write a largely hostile life of a living public man is an original feat, but originality is not quite enough. It has only been achieved at the cost of scrappiness, repetition, and lack of co-ordination. The book does, however, whet the appetite for the biography that can one day be written.

Angus Wilson

A RING OF ROSES

MR. W. H. AUDEN has more than once suggested that there are elements common to the writing of a poem and the playing of a game. The greatest of modern philosophers, however, spent a good deal of his life in attempting to find out what constitutes our idea of a game. He was not very successful. If it is as difficult to say what a game is as to define the nature of poetry, then it would seem that Mr. Auden's observation can be of little help when it comes to deciding what constitutes our idea of a poem.

Nevertheless, in the course of his researches, Wittgenstein did make a few experiments and observations which might, like a meagre lantern, illuminate some of our premisses. In a footnote he observes that a parent, on leaving him alone in a room with the children,

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asked him to teach them a game. Wittgenstein proceeded to teach them stud poker. With what degree of alarm we will never know, but, on returning, the parent did remark: "*That* is not what I meant." This implies that there are certain games which just aren't funny in inappropriate situations, an implication which might well serve as a kind of inverted pedestal for an initial survey of Mr. Auden's new book of poems.*

Like practically everything else of any importance, it is divided into three sub-equal parts. In the first of these, called "Bucolics," we are treated to a fine display of that grand old game: *Think of a subject and I'll make it my own.* "Horae Canonicae," which constitutes the last section, treats the times of the day in a similar, though somewhat more weighty, manner. It is an example of *One over the clock* or *The mystic's steeplechase.* But Mr. Auden has reserved for the centrepiece of his volume the full vigour and virtuosity of his invention, the final brilliance of both his sportsmanship and his gamesmanship. It is called "In Sunshine and in Shade," and in it the author's talents are being perpetually shuffled about from the brightest of the one to the most gloomy of the other. In it he goes through a repertoire of games too numerous to mention. Of all he is a master, but some are so silly or so contrived that they not only cannot be enjoyed by a stranger but they even tend to spoil his pleasure in the other pastimes which their creator has devised.

At this point, the industrious critic may relax from his argument and join the master at his poetry board. There he will find Mr. Auden crouching over the exigent subtleties of "The Truest Poetry is the most Feigning." "Ah," he will murmur, "someone as hard-working as myself." With that approving word still hot in the air, the poet jumps up and hits the critic over the head with "A Sanguine Thought," follows it up with a swift kick on the "Permanent Way," and then, to the surprise of everyone, the poet performs a deft *Barcarolle* and sings a couple of *Nocturnes* over his prostrate adversary. All that is strange, and everything alive is strange, seems to be happening continually, yet, when the least sensitive of readers lets the pages slip back to the title poem of the whole book, even he will recognise that something even stranger, stranger perhaps because in spite of its strangeness it is more normal, something very queer indeed is going on from page 35 to page 37. On these pages lies one of the finest English poems of the present century.

It is when we contemplate such a poem that the analogy with a game finally falls through. There is indeed a game in progress, but it is a simple one of juxtaposition, dream against reality, desire against fulfilment, as simple as *Pop goes the Weasel* or *Ring-a-ring of Roses.* To say that this game is being played is to do nothing whatever to explain how such lines as the following ever got written:

The mass and majesty of this world, all
That carries weight and always weighs the same
Lay in the hands of others; they were small
And could not hope for help and no help came:
What their foes liked to do was done, their shame
Was all the worst could wish; they lost their pride
And died as men before their bodies died.

To say all this about "The Shield of Achilles" is not to suggest that it is *technically* more interesting than the other poems in the same volume. In fact, it is not; except in so far as it again proves what Pope stated more than two hundred years ago, that the greatest poems are not those which make the greatest technical advances but those which best, and most simply, use the language that they find about them. There are many of Mr. Auden's new poems which do open up new alleyways into speech but until he has broadened them to allow for a greater weight of traffic they will not be able to support the weight of such statements as are found in this one poem.

It is interesting that Mr. Auden should appear to be concentrating so much attention on the evolution of a satisfactory poetic period (as opposed to a sentence) so shortly after Mr. Eliot's exhortation to all poets to take another look at Milton. In almost all of the "Bucolics" and in many of the other poems he keeps hard at the task of creating a grammatical unit which will spill over the

* *The Shield of Achilles.* By W. H. Auden. Faber. 10s. 6d.

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brim of a short stanza or which will itself fashion a longer one. It must be confessed that he is not uniformly successful. At times, indeed, one is reminded of Pound's adage that poetry should be at least as well written as prose. His long sentences tend to degenerate into a string of tedious or amusing postures, each isolated in the cubicle of a clause. But the attempt remains admirable; for, even where one most laments the results, as in the clumsy "Ode to Gaea," one has a duty to praise those who get up and try to do what almost everybody admits must soon be done and what most of us therefore shy clear of. And there are poems, like "Winds," with which the book opens, where Mr. Auden, almost without mishap, succeeds in breaking through the ten-line barrier.

As for faults, he is content to stick to the old ones while refreshing us with the continually changing range of virtues. He still seems almost incapable of keeping his noun-adjective relationship above the level of a simple syzygy and, though he is able to get more life out of adjectives than any man alive, there remains a thriftless plethora of adjectival nuances. He retains too the techniques of a cataloguer, labelling our desires and deceits with that assiduous vehemence which wearies rather than reforms us. And he is still, as has already been hinted, capable of a thoroughly bad poem. And long may it all continue. The poet who is consistent is usually consistently bad.

IF ONE or two of Mr. Auden's poems appear to be games, and rather cheap games, played at the expense of the reader, there can be no such objection to the latest collection of the verse of Sir Herbert Read.* Whatever strictures one may level against Sir Herbert, it cannot be said that he is not serious. He approaches the task of communicating with his fellow men in a mood of almost devotional sincerity. He will never belong to that reprobate band who fiddled with words while their souls burned eternally away.

The bulk of his new book is taken up with the script of a radio play in which he displays a desperate anxiety about the state of his own and other people's souls. It is often moving and occasionally illuminating but the reader may tend to feel that he is being got at, that he is being proselytised by a somewhat fanatical evangelist of a not very convincing religious dogmatism. The language is simple to the point of being stilted, as simple as any man could wish, and the critic who comes to it fresh from a perusal of Mr. Auden may feel a momentary gratitude for this virtue. But soon he will become aware that it is not simplicity, after all, which makes a good poem. Nothing, in fact, that is even as simple as verbal complication will do. A poem must have complexity, but that must be achieved by methods that are linguistic in a much wider and deeper sense than the most adroit of verbal manipulations. They must be social, psychological, religious, and capable of expressing those subtleties in human and mystical relationships which are inaccessible to any direct statement or questioning of their existence.

It is because Sir Herbert interprets too literally the injunctions of his Muse to say something important that he often fails to convince us of the truth of what he is saying. There is a sense in which the amorous exaggerations of the cavalier poets are more true than these desperate and despairing testimonies; and that sense is the strictly poetic one. When, as in some of the shorter poems like "Lu Yun's Lament" and "Death of a Greek Mercenary," he keeps at a greater distance from his subject, he is much more convincing than when he forces on us the harassed intensities to which his metaphysical experiences have brought him. It is perhaps appropriate that an anarchistic individual should have just these vices and virtues: perhaps it is good for all of us that somebody should dare to have them: but even the wildest of anarchists would do well to remember the following lines in which Mr. Auden defines our human state in so far as it is reflected in our ability to communicate with one another:

What but tall tales, the luck of verbal playing,
Can trick his lying nature into saying
That love, or truth in any serious sense,
Like orthodoxy, is a reticence.

Burns Singer

* *Moon's Farm*. By HERBERT READ. Faber. 10s. 6d.

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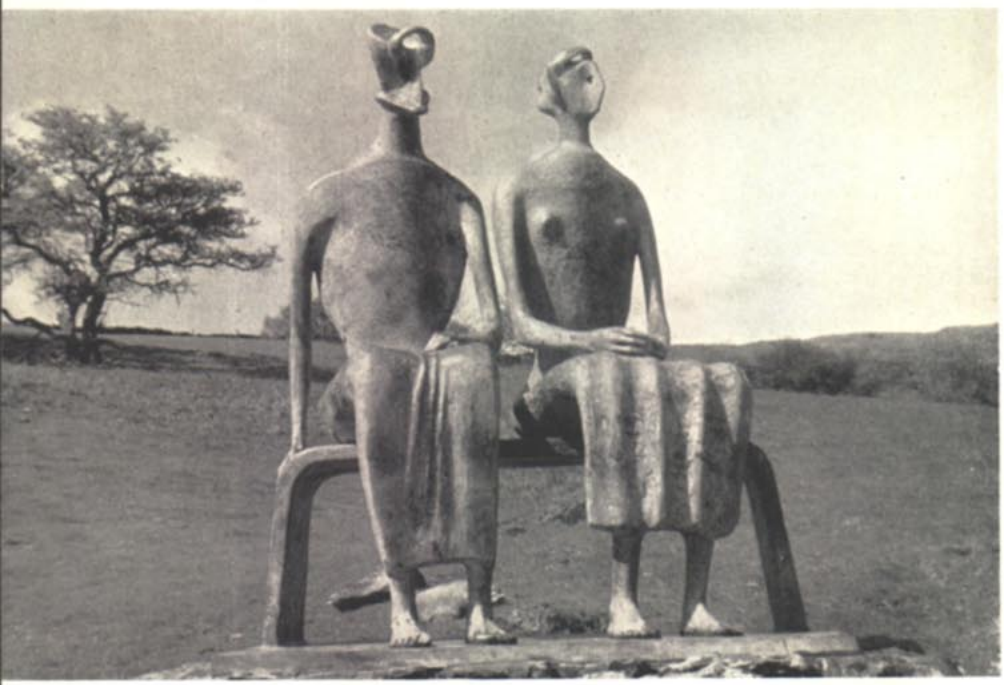

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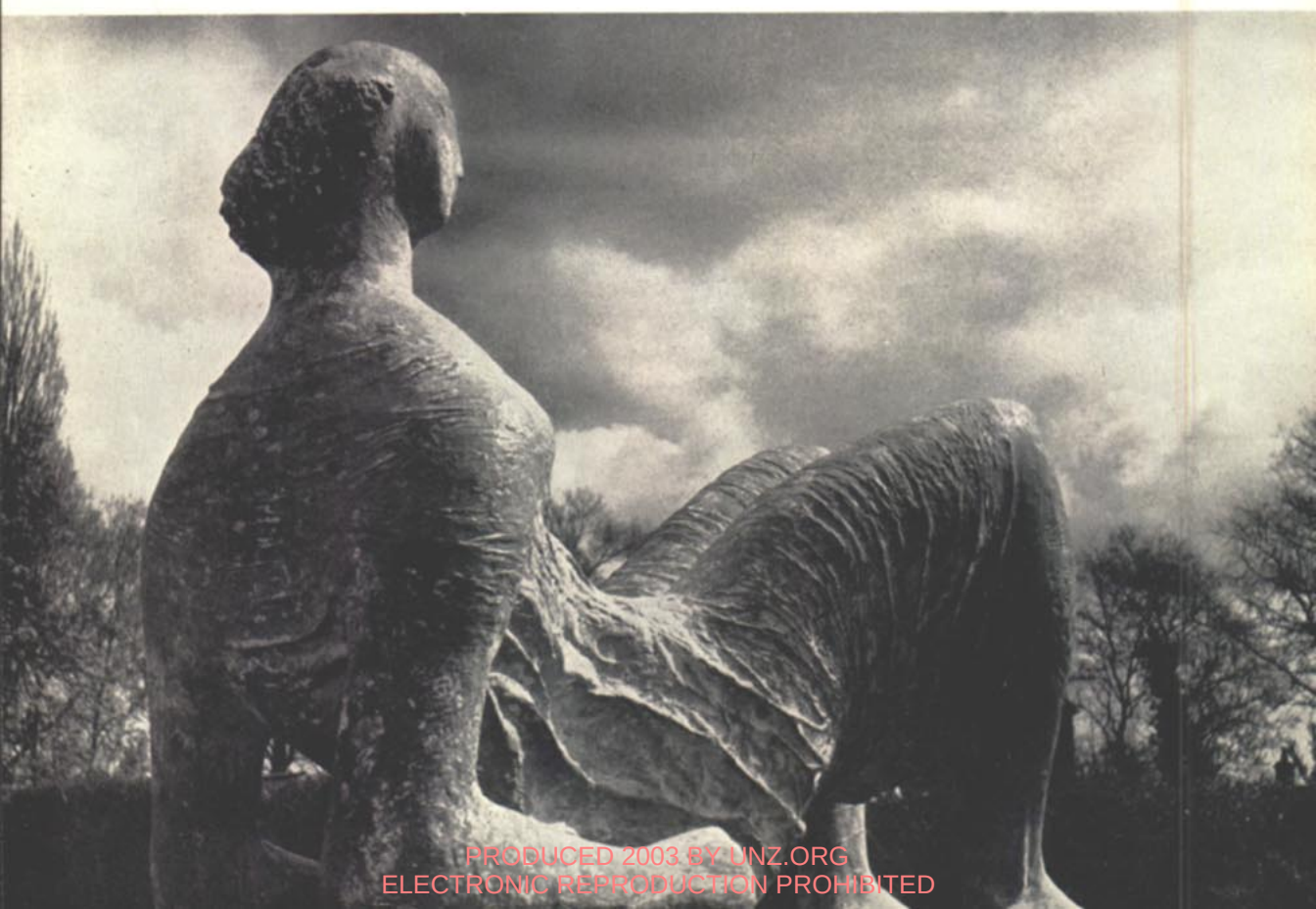

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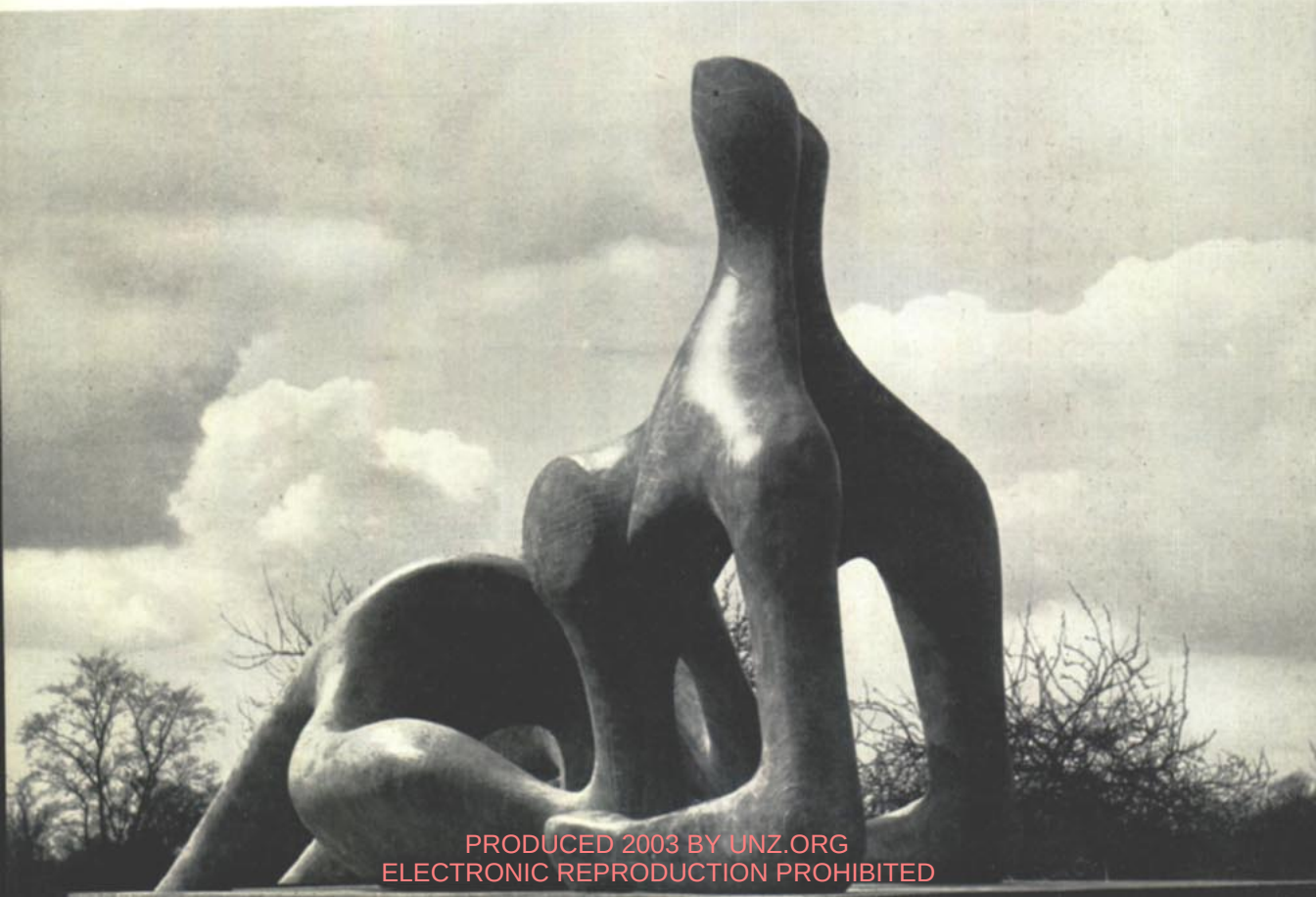

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